THE
RUSSIAN
REVOLUTIONARY
MOVEMENT

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PREFACE.

THE following historical sketch of the revolutionary movement in Russia was originally written with the sole object of enlightening public opinion in a country—Finland—where knowledge of this movement was perhaps even scantier than elsewhere. In the Finnish Grand Duchy the loyalty of the people to the sovereign, fostered by the fidelity of the successive Russian rulers to the compact entered into by Alexander I. with the Finnish "Estates," had always been too sincere to suffer any sympathies to be entertained for those who opposed Tsardom in Russia. The various revolutionary attempts had caused the same horrified astonishment in Finland as in other foreign countries. Alexander II. had liberated the Russian serfs; he had proved liberal in all his dealings with Finland: therefore Finns as a rule regarded those who repeatedly attempted to kill him as criminals. That the Tsar-liberator also had sanctioned the ruthless policy of Muravieff the "hangman" in Poland, and had done his best to curtail the very reforms introduced in the beginning of his reign, hardly anyone in Finland took into account, because hardly anyone in Finland knew the truth about the state of affairs in Russia.

The same causes produced the same effect during most of the reign of Alexander III. He was loyal to his Finnish subjects, and the Finns were loyal to him, never troubling their heads very much about the interior development within Russia.

It was reserved for Nicholas II., the son and successor of Alexander III., to revolutionise the relations that had existed for ninety years between Russia and Finland. When in 1899 the policy of unification suggested to him by foolishly short-sighted advisers caused him to break his solemn promise to rule Finland in accordance with its constitution, he compelled the Finns to seek for friends and allies in the uneven struggle forced upon them. Everyone, while comprehending that the ultimate aim of the new policy was nothing less than the complete annihilation of Finland as an autonomous state and of the Finnish people as a distinct national unit, comprehended also that Finland would be unable single-handed to carry on the fight against autocracy with any chance of success. Yet it was evident that no allies might be counted upon in the Western world, no Power having any reason to step into the arena for Finland's sake, even though every civilised nation expressed sincere sympathy with the Finns, and strongly condemned the faithlessness of the Tsar and of his Government.

The only possible allies were clearly to be looked for in Russia itself among the men who for many years had been relentlessly fighting autocratic despotism. It was becoming necessary to arrive at an understanding with the different opposition parties in the Empire in order to unite forces with the men who, in spite of the tremendous odds against them, had succeeded in causing the foundations of the throne of the Tsar to shake and tremble. But these very men were in Finland regarded as criminals, or at the best as utopians of a dangerous kind, wholly incapable of anything but destructive work.

Under such circumstances the first thing to be done was manifestly the work of enlightening public opinion in Finland in regard to the internal development and the revolutionary movement in Russia. Advanced members of the Finnish

opposition immediately took this work in hand, publishing in every issue of the clandestine papers accounts of occurrences in the Empire, and advocating in the same widely spread publications an alliance with all other parties struggling for liberty and human rights in the Tsar's dominions.

The book now put before Anglo-Saxon readers was written as part of this work of enlightenment. In order to give a comprehensive idea of the relation of causes to effect, it had to describe the internal policy pursued by the different rulers of Russia, as well as the still more revolutionary opposition engendered by this very policy. In order again to render the description accessible to the great mass of readers, it was necessary to concentrate the material as much as possible, and to leave out much that Russian friends had supplied and might reasonably have expected to find mentioned in the following pages.

Some reviewers have expressed doubts in regard to the impartiality of the author as manifestly an enemy of Russian autocracy. No partiality has wittingly dictated the opinions expressed, nor have any statements of facts been made without as far as possible having been checked as to correctness by reference to other than revolutionary sources of information. Yet so far as personal impressions and feelings go the author unhesitatingly pleads guilty of partiality to the fighters against autocratic despotism, in the same degree as a lawyer is guilty of partiality to the cause he defends.

The self-sacrificing enthusiasm and the death-despising devotion to ideals which meet the student at every turn in the history of this movement make it difficult to assume and maintain a thoroughly impartial attitude. The pure, altruistic exaltation which has driven the well-nigh countless victims of the struggle to flight into foreign lands, to death on the scaffold or in the icebound wilds of Siberia, affects the

coolness of the spectator, and renders it impossible to weigh to a nicety the faults and the merits of the men and women, of the young girls and boys, who have cheerfully given their liberty and their lives to the great cause of freedom. The beauty of their sacrifices causes the political errors they may have committed to pale into insignificance, and sheds so hideously glaring a light on the crimes of autocracy that the good it has done or has wished to do mayhap disappears too completely from view. Never was there fought an apparently more hopeless fight; never anywhere was the disproportion between the forces of the combatants greater; nor, on the other hand, was ever the inability of mere material power to withstand the onslaught of ideas more convincingly proved. For notwithstanding the might of the Russian Tsars, notwithstanding the paucity of their own numbers, notwithstanding the inhuman cruelty displayed against them, the revolutionaries have gradually forced autocracy to the very brink of the grave whither it is bound ignominiously to descend in no distant future.

If the present work is able to give the reader a comprehensive idea of the long-protracted struggle which at last has brought victory within sight its aim will have been accomplished, for in so doing it cannot fail to propagate hatred of autocratic despotism as practised in Russia, and to gain sympathies for those staking their lives and their all for the good of their brethren, the innumerable victims of oppression in the huge Russian Empire.

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON, *June*, 1905.

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THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST REVOLUTIONARY OUTBREAK IN RUSSIA.

THE seed of the social evolution in Russia which in our day has brought Tsardom to the verge of revolution must be considered as having been sown by none other than Tsar Peter the Reformer, or the Great, as he is styled. He it was who by force flung the then thoroughly barbarous Russian Empire into the stream of Western civilisation, and with fire and sword compelled it to flow onward until European ideas and culture had taken far too deep a root for them to be ever again eradicated. It was a revolution from above, by which Peter had not the slightest intention of altering or introducing any change into the absolutist form of his government. Nevertheless, he set the ball rolling which, without his will or knowledge, broke down the barriers that had maintained Russia from time immemorial as a more than semi-Oriental autocracy, into which the long ascendency of the Tartars had transformed it. There existed originally, even in Russia, a right of the people to make its voice heard in the councils of the land; but this right was abolished by the Tartar khans. They forced the mass of the people into a condition of slavish subjection to their masters, and the Russian Tsars became their heirs at a later period. That the love of freedom and the demand

for self-government existed in Russia at that time is abundantly proved by the free military republics established by Russians in the Ukraine, which, after countless struggles for liberty and independence, were finally compelled by Catharine II. to submit to the Russian autocracy; for it was not until her time that serfdom was first introduced among the earlier Zaporoges.

Tsar Peter was quite as masterful a despot as any of his predecessors, though he was at the same time sufficiently open-minded to recognise the fact that he would never be able to satisfy the insatiable lust for dominion which animated him against his Western neighbours, unless he succeeded in spreading among his own people the higher culture possessed by those neighbours in all material matters. Had he but considered that he was thereby opening the door of his empire to the intellectual influences which ultimately led to the downfall of absolute monarchy in all the States of Europe, he would perhaps have pondered a little longer before he used his sovereign power to break down the wall that had hitherto divided his people from the rest of Europe. But his penetration was not so keen; it was impossible that it should be.

After him Catherine II. helped the most to propagate European ideas in Russia. She had just as little real intention as Peter I. of introducing free institutions into her empire; but that did not hinder her from courting the founders of the revolutionary movement in France, the encyclopædists, approving their doctrines, inviting liberal-minded foreigners to her court, and openly, by word and deed, displaying her contempt for the principles, both social and religious, on which the Russian autocracy was based. Her example was by no means without influence on Russian society. The new doctrines and ideas spread very rapidly among the upper classes, and wherever the seed so cast fell on the soil

of genuine intelligence and education it sprouted and struck roots, from which new shoots have been continually springing to the present day. In the Russia of that time, however, there was not the remotest symptom of any ideas of a revolutionary character or of a tendency hostile to the government. The so-called revolutions which frequently occurred were nothing more or less than Palace revolutions, court intrigues and conspiracies against the person of the ruler, their sole object being to set another equally absolute sovereign in the place of the one dethroned. It was not until after the great French revolution that people in Russia first began to think more or less of the possibility of a form of government other than that of an autocracy; but there was no attempt made to put into actual practice the theories which found favour in enlightened circles until after the defeat of the French army of invasion.

The titanic struggle against Napoleon and his final defeat produced an intellectual ferment in Russia such as had never occurred before. Russian troops and officers came into closer contact with western Europeans, by whose side they fought, and with whom they marched through Europe to the French capital. Here, as in the rest of Europe, many changes had taken place. A new spirit dominated, and a complete transformation in the domain of thought and study had occurred during the years succeeding the revolution without destroying the most important results of the latter. For not even the Napoleonic despotism had been able to obliterate the traces of the powerful movement that had passed over the land; not even the high-handed Napoleon himself had ventured to do anything but utilise for his own ends the fruits and results of this movement, while in other parts of Europe his onslaughts, far from destroying the harvest of the revolution, only brought it more rapidly to maturity.

In Germany the Russians had an opportunity of seeing what a people, in spite of a thoroughly bad government, could do in the defence of their country and in getting rid of the foreign, oppressive, and dishonourable tutelage under which the kingdom and its rulers existed. The Russians, who took note of all the social conditions of the countries they passed through, soon saw, as others had, that the German nation was indebted to the German League of Virtue and the leaders of that mighty popular movement for the possibility and power of regenerating and rehabilitating their country.

In France they contemplated at first hand the consequences and effects of the liberation of the nation by the revolution. They beheld a people who had been brought to the verge of ruin and despair by a system of government which resembled that of Russia in all essentials, but who, spontaneously and unorganised, had risen against the oppressor ready to risk the only thing they could really call their own, their life, in the fight for human rights and existence: a people whom despair had rendered irresistible, victorious, and who had for all time destroyed absolutism in their country, and who, in spite of inexperience, serious blunders, and excesses, had succeeded in building a new form of government on the ruins of the old one; a people who, in their struggle against practically the whole of Europe, had developed their national strength so far as actually to bring Europe to their feet a few years later, and, even in their delirium of victory and their boundless admiration for their great leader, yet knew how to preserve intact the most valuable result of the revolution, the freedom of the masses of the people and the right to live their own life.

Such examples could not fail to exercise a powerful influence on thinking people, of whom there were many

among the officers of the Russian troops. Their own land, their own nation, lay trodden under the heel of an autocracy and bureaucracy that made all progress impossible. The vast majority of the people consisted of serfs, outcast slaves, possessed of no other civil right but that of fighting and dying for their country in her hour of danger. The privileged upper classes had all the rights and, with but few exceptions, abused their power, abandoning themselves to a life of luxury and enjoyment; and at the head of all was the Tsar, the autocrat, whose unlimited authority was always, in a great if not the greatest measure, wielded by favourites and their puppets, first of all for their own benefit, but very rarely for the advantage of the people.

The idea of the possibility of bringing about such a change as the introduction into Russia of legal and well-ordered conditions, liberty for the people and equal rights for all, germinated in many minds during the long stay of the Russian armies in western Europe. Imbued with enthusiasm for what they had learned and seen with their own eyes, people began to dream of nothing less than the overthrow of the autocracy, and the conversion, at one stroke, of Russia into a republic where untrammelled freedom should rule and institutions be established similarly as in France.

After the return of the troops it became quite the fashion in the higher ranks of society to conspire against the sovereign Government. The liberal tendencies which Alexander I. displayed during the first period of his reign had, to a very great extent, contributed still further to promote the theoretical liberalism which had its origin in the reign of Catherine. Alexander's liberalism, however, changed later to its exact opposite in the shape of a re-action which became ever more acute the deeper he fell under the influence of the unworthy Araktscheieff; this, however, only served to exasperate the feeling of impatience and growing

discontent, more or less unconsciously present in the minds of most people.

This discontent assumed a concrete shape after the return of the army from France. It was expressly directed against the system itself, against the autocratic form of government. In all those circles where national affairs were matters of interest the questions of reforms, improvements, representation, and constitution were eagerly discussed. Every salon in St. Petersburg became a kind of hotbed of conspiracy, where far-reaching projects were handled in a manner which, from the Russian point of view, came very near to high treason.

The great majority of these people hardly ever thought seriously of translating their words and thoughts into action, though besides these amateur conspirators there were others who were firmly resolved to proceed further. The greatest enthusiasts set themselves to work, immediately on their return home, at scheming plans of revolution and forming unions and associations to carry these plans into execution. The German League of Virtue served as the chief pattern for the organisations which were started, their principal power lying in the army, although their members included many others than those belonging to the military profession. As early as 1820 there were several such societies in active existence, the most prominent among them being the so-called Association of Welfare, and all of them with the same clearly expressed object in view, that of wholly or partially changing the existing form of government either by peaceful or violent methods.

At the same time there was a great divergence of opinion between the different groups, so that at the very outset it was found impossible to come to an agreement on a common programme of action. Even in the Welfare Association two sharply opposed sets of opinions soon asserted themselves.

The adherents of one party, the moderates, desired merely to assist and support the Government by means of the legal machinery at their disposal, and to induce it to adopt further measures conducive to the interest and advantage of the people, so that all abuses might be gradually abolished, improvements and reforms carried out, and the system of government modified step by step. The representatives of the radicals saw, however, that neither the Government nor its tools could be improved by partial reforms passed on legitimate lines, because the dominating system could and would neutralise their effect. For this reason they insisted that the system itself which kept the majority of the people in a state of illegal bondage must first of all be totally altered and substituted by another form of government which would permit of the establishment of real and lasting reforms. The irreconcilableness displayed by both these leading parties became at last so notorious that the "Welfare Association" was dissolved at a meeting held in February, 1821. In its place two new associations, "the Northern" and "the Southern," were at once inaugurated by the more progressive members of the old society, both of them with a much more radical programme. The Southern Association was centred in Tulchin, the headquarters of the Southern Army, and the Northern was settled in St. Petersburg.

Both were undilutedly revolutionary in their objects, which consisted of nothing less than the organisation of a far-reaching revolt which should replace the irresponsible autocracy by a democratic and popular form of government. It is true that the leaders of the Northern Association limited their plans at first to a constitutional monarchy as the end to be attained, whereas the Southerners demanded a republic; but both of them were equally revolutionary in so far as they had for their immediate object the destruction of the existing form of government. At last, however, they

came to an agreement on one point, namely, that if the revolt succeeded the crown was to be offered to Alexander I. as a constitutional monarch, but that if he rejected the offer the entire dynasty was to be removed and a federal republic proclaimed. In the Northern Association as well the notion of a republic gained more ground at a later period, thanks to the greater energy and activity displayed by the more radical Southerners, by whom, in fact, most of the practical preparations for the revolt were made.

The guiding spirit of this Southern Association was Colonel Pestel, commander of the Viatka regiment and adjutant to Field-Marshal Prince Witgenstein, the chief of the Southern Army. Other men closely attached to Pestel and his strongest supporters in the revolutionary association were Uschnevsky, the cool-headed and discreet quartermaster-general of the Southern Army; the energetic and laborious Bestuscheff-Rjumin; Generals Fonvizin and Prince Volkhonsky; Colonels Artamon Muravieff, commanding the regiment of Akhtyr Hussars, Narischkin, chief of the Taroutino regiment, Schweikowsky, chief of the Saratoff regiment, and Abramoff and Tisenhausen, commanders of the Poltava and Kasan regiments. Among the most zealous members were the two brothers, the Lieutenant-Colonels Sergius and Matvei Muravieff-Apostol.

The Southern Association was in intimate connection with another secret organisation known as the "United Slavs," the existence of which had been discovered by Bestuscheff-Rjumin, and which in its turn had also close relations with officers of different ranks in the Southern Army. Bestuscheff-Rjumin had, moreover, established a system of co-operation with the Polish secret societies in Warsaw, where revolutionary schemes were also being worked out, although really with the sole purpose of freeing Poland from the

Russian yoke and re-establishing the former constitution of Poland. The Poles would not hear of a general federal republic, and negotiations were carried on for a long time before an agreement based on a compromise could be arranged, according to which the Polish revolutionists, who were to settle Polish matters in their own way later on, undertook to raise the flag of revolt simultaneously with Pestel and his co-conspirators in the Southern Army. Their first step was to be the seizure of the person of the Grand Duke Constantine Paulovitch, brother of the Emperor and heir to the throne, at that time Viceroy of Russian Poland.

In the Northern Association the most active, although not the most influential, part was played by the minstrel Ryleieff. Greater influence was wielded outside, and to a small extent inside, the association by some of the other leaders: Prince Trubetskoi, commander of the Preobrajenski Regiment of Guards, and also attached to the General Staff; Mikkoff, chief of the Finland regiment; Nikita Muravieff, captain on the General Staff; Prince Obolenski; Bestuscheff; Jakubeowitch; young Prince Odoyewsky, attached to the Court, and therefore able to give exact information as to the utterances and doings of members of the Imperial family, etc. High civil officials, such as Krasnokutsky, the Chief Procurator of the Imperial Senate, had also joined the Northern Association and took part in the conspiracy.

As regards the execution of their project, it was first of all resolved to make the Emperor prisoner on the occasion of his presence at the manœuvres of the Southern Army; immediately afterwards, to seize the fortified town of Bobruisk; and then to communicate with Warsaw and St. Petersburg, where the other conspirators were to proclaim their adhesion to the revolt and arrest their most powerful

opponents—in Warsaw, amongst others, as mentioned, the brother of the Emperor and heir to the throne.

This plan must, to any one acquainted with the Russia of to-day, appear very foolhardy and foredoomed to failure. It is, indeed, difficult to understand how it could be possible, considering the limited intellectual forces at that time available in Russia, to build anything solid on the ruins of the system threatened with destruction. The mere project of overthrowing the autocratic system was by no means impossible of execution, and would probably have succeeded had not unforeseen circumstances, arising from the sudden death of Alexander I., blocked the way.

In Alexander's time there existed no really efficient police organisation in Russia, at least none that could be in any way compared with that which Nicholas I. created. The mere idea of the possibility of the very troops and officers of the Tsar being likely to attack him or his highest military and civil authorities would have been scouted as ridiculous by any official person. It is true that fortresses and palaces were guarded, but really only as a matter of form, because it was customary, not because it ever occurred to anyone that the guards might be wanted in earnest. On this the conspirators built their plans. In the "Palace revolutions" which were formerly of such frequent occurrence—the father and grandfather of Alexander I. had been overthrown and murdered in this way—the soldiery, so far from making difficulties, had blindly obeyed the orders of their leaders in everything. If only the officers could be trusted the regiment itself could be depended on. It was only a question of having a few trustworthy regiments at hand when the first decisive step was to be taken and then success might be considered as pretty certain.

The principal features of the plan of conspiracy were based on these lines. Early in the year of 1826 a large meeting

was to be called for the purpose of apportioning the various *rôles* and determining the post of each person when the critical moment should arrive. This was to happen when the Tsar would be present, not long afterwards, at the grand manœuvres of the Southern Army. As soon as the time of his arrival was ascertained, the work was to be commenced, on a day when the Viatka regiment, commanded by Colonel Pestel, was on guard duty, by the seizure of Prince Witgenstein and his entourage, who could not be relied upon. Immediately on Alexander's arrival he and his suite of high military and civil officials were to be dealt with in the same manner, Bobruisk was then to be occupied, and the revolt, as indicated, further extended.

Towards the end of the year 1825, however, Alexander I. fell ill and died quite unexpectedly at Taganrog, in South Russia, while on the way to the Crimea. This event upset the entire plan of the conspirators, as no preparations had been made for an immediate outbreak of the revolution. Nothing was ready, there was no time for the necessary decisions and modifications of the plans; but, in spite of that, the conspirators found themselves compelled to act at once, in order, by dealing a bold stroke, to take advantage of the uncertainty which existed respecting the succession to the throne.

The next heir to the throne, Constantine Paulovitch, had renounced the succession, although this renunciation was never made public; it was, on the contrary, kept strictly secret. After he had obtained a divorce from his first consort, a Princess of Saxe-Coburg, Constantine married a Pole, the Countess Grudzinka, and, as he obstinately refused to annul this marriage, it became a matter of necessity for him to renounce the succession to the throne. In consequence of this, Alexander I. had decreed that Nicholas should be his successor, but, possibly in the hope

that Constantine might still prove amenable, this fact was kept secret and the written decree deposited with the metropolitan in Moscow.

Whether Nicholas was aware of the contents of this document does not appear to be made quite clear; but, however that may be, as soon as the news of Alexander's death reached him he did homage and took the oath of allegiance to Constantine in St. Petersburg, while the latter about the same time made known his renunciation of the throne, and even did homage to his younger brother Nicholas, causing the people of Warsaw to do the same. Thus, on the 26th December, 1825, there were two Tsars in Russia, homage being paid to each of them in two different places. In Moscow, for instance, the governor-general called upon the higher officials to swear fealty to Constantine; but the Metropolitan refused to administer the oath, declaring that he knew a secret which would render void any oath of allegiance taken to Constantine. Bewilderment was the predominant feeling among all classes at that time. Many people assumed that Nicholas would make an attempt to depose his brother and seize the throne for himself; no one rightly knew how matters stood in regard to the succession, and the conspirators determined to profit, as far as possible, by this state of affairs.

During the day of the 26th December a courier arrived from Warsaw, bearing the news of Constantine's public renunciation of the throne, and it was then decided that the Senate and the rest of the highest officials should be called upon to swear allegiance to Nicholas on the following day, the 27th. The ceremony was to be performed at seven in the morning. It was only the evening before that Ryleieff was informed of this by the Chief Procurator Krasnokútsky, already alluded to, and he at once communicated the news to the rest of the conspirators, who

decided to take immediate action. The only course they considered at all possible, which they resolved to put into execution, was to assemble the next morning in the public square facing the Senate, and at the same time to lead thither all the detachments of troops who would answer their call. With the help of these and that of the discontented crowds, on whom they thought they might rely, Nicholas and the Senate would be compelled to issue a manifesto establishing a provisional Government until representatives of the people from the different parts of the empire could be convoked for the purpose of deliberating together and drawing up proposals for a constitution.

At daybreak on the 27th the soldiers of the Moscow regiment and those of the Marine Guards, plus sundry other troops, were roused by their officers and received orders to march out. Before, however, they could leave the barracks, the general in command got wind of what was about to happen and tried to prevent it, though the officers succeeded in inducing the majority of the troops to go with them, and led them into the square in front of the Senate. Numerous well-armed citizens joined the military, and a square was formed round the equestrian statue of Peter the Great, with the design, if necessary, of giving battle to the troops of Nicholas. Loud cries for liberty and constitution, "Konstitutsia," were raised both by officers and soldiers, who so little understood the meaning of "Konstitutsia" that they thought they were cheering the wife of Constantine, and were fully persuaded that the revolt concerned the person of Nicholas alone.

The latter, on his part, had also given orders for troops to be ready; but being uncertain as to the real extent of the revolt and the designs of the conspirators, he first allowed the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg to make an attempt to induce the rebels, by persuasion, to abandon their projects

and lay down their arms. The Metropolitan was, however, courteously desired to withdraw, which he did. Then the governor-general, Miloradovitch, who had gained so brilliant a reputation by his exploits in the war against Napoleon, rode up and ordered the rioters to disperse. He was received with a musket shot and fell dead to the ground.

Thereupon Nicholas who commanded his own troops in person, gave the cavalry the order to charge. Three times Orloff led his troopers against the rebels' square, and was three times repulsed. Then came the turn of the artillery, who pointed their guns, loaded with grape shot, against the rioters. The latter exhorted the unarmed crowds by whom they were surrounded to withdraw, as it was dangerous to remain longer in the neighbourhood.

Then thundered forth the command to the artillery: "Fire." But not a shot was heard. Beside himself with rage, the commanding officer roared out to the artilleryman who had to fire the first gun, asking whether he had not heard the order. "Yes, your honour, . . . but . . . but they are our own people."

Hesitation was of no avail; a few minutes later a storm of grape shot fell upon the rebels and stretched a heap of them dead and wounded on the ground. The rest defended themselves bravely, but could do little against the superior numbers and cannon of the Government troops. By ten o'clock in the forenoon all resistance was quelled, and Nicholas remained the undisputed victor.

While these events were occurring in the capital, Pestel and the brothers Muravieff-Apostol, of the Southern Army, had already been arrested. Two members of the Southern Association had betrayed the other conspirators, with the consequence that the three leaders were at once arrested. No sooner, however, was this news spread abroad than a number

of subaltern officers belonging to the union of "United Slavs" hurried to the scene, weapons in hand, and liberated the two Muravieff-Apostols. Pestel had already been removed, and had to be left in the hands of the enemy.

Sergius Muravieff-Apostol placed himself at the head of a portion of the Tchernigoff regiment and a few more troops who had taken part in the revolt. With them he occupied the town of Vassilkoff, and did his best to gain time in order to attract other troops animated by the same spirit as himself; but before he could get a larger number together he was attacked by the "loyal" division under General Rot and compelled to fight. Muravieff fell wounded at the first volley, his men were scattered after a brief combat, and he and his friends were made prisoners. The revolution of December was at an end, and Nicholas was autocrat.

He began his reign with the most rigorous reprisals against all who had presumed to imagine the possibility of a free Russia, who would have freed the peasants from their servitude, substituted laws for tyrannical caprice, and secured for the governed the right to share in the making of the laws by which they were to be ruled. The vengeance of the Tsar destroyed leaders and helpers alike, of all ages and social ranks down to the common soldier, who, after all, only obeyed the orders of his superiors. No one was spared.

Pestel, Ryleieff, Michael Bestuscheff Rjumin, Sergius Muravieff-Apostol, and Kakhoffski were condemned to death by hanging. Such a method of execution had not been witnessed in Russia for many years, and the hangman was ignorant of his business, bungling the work so badly that three of the condemned, Rylejeff, Kakhoffski, and Muravieff-Apostol fell to the ground, the latter breaking his legs. General Tschernischeff, who superintended the execution,

had them carried back to the scaffold and hanged afresh.

One hundred and twenty of the other conspirators, all belonging, without exception, to the most cultured classes of Russia, and many to the highest aristocracy, were sentenced to banishment and penal servitude, and dragged, bound in chains, to Siberia, whence a few of them were allowed to return thirty-five years later during the reign of Alexander II. All the others had succumbed to their sufferings and privations, though none of them had so far abased himself as to renounce his convictions or beg for mercy.

If possible the common soldiers, who had shared by compulsion in the revolt, were still more cruelly treated. Many hundreds were beaten to death, others slowly tortured to death in the different prisons, and thousands crushed by long years of penal servitude. Those were the days when running the gauntlet was the usual punishment for soldiers, in which the offender would perhaps receive three, eight or twelve thousand strokes, that is, so many that no man, however strong and tough, could possibly survive the ordeal.

Such was the terrible sequel to the first outbreak of the revolutionary spirit in Russia, and during the whole period of his reign Nicholas I. suppressed with the same relentless cruelty all manifestations of discontent in his empire. In spite of all, however, he never succeeded in gagging the revolutionary spirit. On the contrary, it spread abroad even in his time, and caused some of the finest intellects in Russia to risk fortune, future, and hopes, to devote themselves heart and soul to the task of implanting in Russian society the conviction that nothing but the abolition of the autocracy could secure to the Russian people any chance of leading a life worthy of human beings. The spirit of the men of December, the "Dekrabists," lived on. Their sacrifice was not made in vain, and their example has again and again

incited emulation. The seed of revolution which they sowed in the soil of Holy Russia has struck such deep roots that the combined forces of autocracy can never exterminate them, no matter how ruthlessly those forces may be employed against the opposition.

CHAPTER II.

THE OPPOSITION UNDER NICHOLAS I.

AFTER accounts had been settled with the men of December Russian society lay bound at the feet of the autocrat. His rigour and cruelty, not only against those who had taken a personal part in the insurrectionary movement, but also against their relatives and friends, stirred and increased to the point of speechless exasperation the discontent of a large portion of these people with absolutism. Yet no one dared to give expression to this discontent. Nearly every one of the highest families of the land had been struck, in the person of one or other of its members, by the vengeance of the Tsar. The rest were terror-stricken and abstained from all matters savouring of politics. Silence and quiet, as deep as the grave, reigned throughout Russia. This was what the Tsar desired. From his earliest years he had manifested the greatest admiration and predilection for strict military discipline and an equally marked dislike of the humanitarian and semi-liberal opinions which were in fashion during the first half of the reign of Alexander I. That officers and soldiers should conspire against the established order of society, oppose the dictates of their superiors, and revolt against him, the holy person of the Tsar, that was, indeed, a thing that he could never forget, much less forgive. To him blind, unquestioning obedience towards superiors constituted the first and highest duty of man, and, consequently, he looked upon the empire and its inhabitants as an army in which discipline could never

be too severe or regulations too precise. Any doubt as to the correctness of this attitude of his, or any criticism of his State proceedings based on this attitude, he regarded as a manifestation of insubordination, and punished them accordingly. If, as Mackenzie Wallace remarks in his book on Russia, he never said, *L'Etat, c'est moi*, it was simply because he accepted this so absolutely as a matter of course, that there was no occasion to say it.

He governed his empire according to this conception of his of monarchy by the grace of God. He looked upon democracy as synonymous with anarchy, and sought, therefore, by all the means at his command to protect his people against all the "dangerous" ideas of Western liberals. So early as 1826, shortly after his accession, Nicholas issued the most rigorous prohibition to all newspapers appearing in Russia, with the exception of the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, which was edited by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, against making the slightest comment on Government measures. Two years later, by a special Imperial ukase, he ordered the establishment of three more censorships in addition to the ordinary one. It was provided by this ukase that everything written on the subjects of the Church and religion must be examined by the bishops or consistories before being submitted to the ordinary censor; that dramatic pieces, after being passed by the censor, must be subjected for approval by the "third section"; and that scientific works would have to stand the test of examination by special expert committees. At a later period the Finance and War Ministries (as well as the Manager of the Studs!) applied for the right of preliminary examination of all publications relating to their affairs, and this right was granted to them by special Imperial rescript. Repressive censorship could hardly, one would think, be carried much farther; yet other circulars were often issued in which all allusion in print

to this or that matter was prohibited. Again, foreign books and newspapers were forbidden admission into the Empire unless their contents were of the most innocent character, that is, dealing with things which had not the slightest connection with politics, least of all with liberal political ideas. Native writers were watched with unceasing vigilance, and were speedily silenced if, in spite of the censor and his regulations, they indulged in any remarks distasteful to the Government and its officials. The number of students in the universities fell away considerably, and the professorial chairs for political law, national economy, and other political subjects were abolished, while in their place the number of military schools of various kinds was greatly increased. Russians were prevented as much as possible from visiting Europe, and foreigners travelling in Russia were generally kept under strict police surveillance.

For the purpose of maintaining order as established by him in his empire the Tsar relied chiefly on the police. Both the ordinary and secret police and gendarmerie were entirely reorganised, enormously augmented, and invested with an authority the like of which could probably not be found in any other country calling itself civilised. Police spies were recruited from all classes of society, and were to be found everywhere, in all Government offices, hotels, theatres and other public places, in every house and salon. No one could be sure that remarks made before a small and trusted circle would not be reported to the police and their dreaded chiefs, Dubelt and Beckendorf. The punishment for an unguarded word or a passing jest might very easily be —and, indeed, very often was—many years' banishment to one of the remotest parts of the Empire. In a word, the government and policy of Nicholas were distinguished by a reactionary despotism such as few countries or people have had to suffer in modern times.

At first this policy seemed to obtain its object. With few exceptions, the liberals who would have ventured to murmur were in exile or in prison. Their adherents, among whom resentment against the Tsar naturally reached its highest point, were treated as suspects and criminals. Their petitions for at least a partial relaxation of their inhumanly hard penalties were either brutally rejected or altogether ignored. Women who begged to be allowed to join their husbands and share their fate were, if by chance their requests were listened to—as, for instance, in the case of Princess Trubetskoi—sent to Siberia with the ordinary gangs of prisoners, and treated as convicted and condemned criminals, both on the journey and after reaching the place of exile. Nicholas' intention of striking terror into the generation to which the "Dekabrists" belonged succeeded admirably. No one, or hardly anyone, dared openly to oppose the Tsar and his Government. The malcontents retired from the world, to their estates or elsewhere, in order to escape from the oppressive surroundings which were everywhere the rule.

Nevertheless, in families, schools, and the principal centres of learning the story of the bold uprising of the men of December, their courage and self-sacrifice for the weal of Russia and her people, passed quietly from mouth to mouth. The impossibility of speaking openly about the great revolutionary attempt or discussing and criticising the objects and plans of the actors therein, and the horrible cruelty with which they were punished, contributed to invest them in the eyes of the majority of people with the halo of martyrdom, and caused the narrative of their deeds and fate to become a legend, acting even in their lifetime, with mysterious force on ardent temperaments. The more despotical reaction continued to increase and weigh upon Russia and her people, the more did respect and esteem deepen for those martyrs who had dared to resist a yoke growing ever and

ever more unbearable. A generation was coming on whose spirit had not been broken by the scenes of horror enacted before and after the accession of Nicholas, but had, on the contrary, been nourished on the history of the "Dekabrists" and the unflinching courage which impelled the latter, rather than disown their convictions, to linger out their lives amidst the unknown horrors of Siberia. This generation, with every onward step in life, had opportunities of recognising how right the revolutionary leaders were in attributing to the autocracy of the Tsars the root and origin of the intolerable conditions prevailing in Russia.

That such a disposition existed, and was on the increase, became more evident in proportion to the increased strictness of the reactionary regime. Now it would be some skit on the Tsars which gave occasion for arrests and banishments, or again an association of young men at one or other of the universities, an illegal combination which had always a more or less direct anti-governmental tendency, and which for that reason was invariably suppressed with the utmost severity. Or perhaps it would be some newspaper article published in spite of the censor, as, for instance, the notorious letter of Tschaadaieff. The author of this letter, a former adjutant of Alexander I., whose radical views and bitter tongue had brought him into public notoriety, had, in his despair over the crab-like progress of intellectual life and culture under the government of Nicholas, addressed a letter to Nadeshdin, the publisher of the *Moskva Teleskopet*. In this letter, which had been accepted by the censor for publication in the paper, Tschaadaieff declared that the nine hundred years of Russia's existence were a blank in the history of the human mind and furnished an instructive warning example for the rest of Europe; that it was a land without a past, with an aimless present, and, therefore, had no future to hope for. The paper was

suppressed, the publisher exiled to the province of Vologda, the censor permanently dismissed from the service of the State, and the author, Tschaadaieff, declared a lunatic. His words, however, spread over the country, and aroused in many people the consciousness of what such a despotism as that of Nicholas really meant, while they contributed to an incredible extent to strengthen the spirit of opposition.

The bulk of the public consoled itself for the melancholy condition of home affairs with the thought that in exchange the Empire had gained strength abroad. The words of the Tsar carried great weight in the States of Europe. The other European monarchs set their hopes on him, for it was important that democracy and liberalism should be stifled, and the Russian Tsar did not hesitate to come forward as the pillar and champion of absolutism, both diplomatically and in arms, as in Hungary in 1849. It was of course well understood that the suppression of all private initiative and the concentration of all efforts for social development in the different Government departments resulted, on the one hand, in the complete stagnation of all progress, and on the other, in such a state of corruption among all grades of officials as had never been known before, even in Russia. But it was, at any rate, taken for granted that at least the army, that special hobby of the Tsar, stood on a better footing, that it was magnificently organised and equipped, and was prepared, at any moment, to wage war against all Europe for the advancement of Russia. The enthusiasm caused by the victory over Napoleon had not yet subsided, and, with but few exceptions, the Russians in the time of Nicholas considered their army invincible, the few individuals who ventured to dispute this invincibility being, so to speak, regarded as traitors to their country. Not even the younger generation, whom in the course of forty years the study of smuggled Western literature had converted into enemies of the autocracy,

entertained any doubts as to the military power of Russia.

Their arguments on the subject of reforms were concerned with the system of government, serfdom, civil administration, and methods of education. Their action was limited for a very long time to discussions and theoretical illustrations of the objects and duties of the State on the one hand and the rights of the governed on the other. Their programme at the outset was about as intelligible as their liberalism, if one may really speak of a programme in connection with these young people, who only gradually and half unconsciously began to form a party.

External circumstances and the extravagant despotic caprices of the Government had as their consequence the fact that these academical discussions resulted in the formulation of certain practical demands. The wretched and rightless position of the serfs, the power of the police, the abuse of espionage and the system of bribery which flourished openly even among the judges, the not less open peculation of public moneys, and the indifference displayed by society towards all these and other equally grave matters were facts that were bound to open the eyes of platonic reformers. They soon perceived the abuses which ought first of all to be removed, and the most important and necessary changes to be introduced. These theoretical discussions assumed a concrete form, and began to concentrate themselves in a programme.

The Government, however, was not disposed to tolerate even theoretical discussions if they contained any sort of criticism of governmental methods. The suspicion that people thought unfavourably of the Imperial system was already deemed a sufficient reason for the Government to place such persons under strict police surveillance. If anything could be reported against an individual so watched,

even if only in the shape of remarks made in private letters broken open by the police, then the authorities resorted to arrests, imprisonments, and banishments, not merely against the "guilty" party, but against all those who had been more or less closely connected with him. These proceedings became more common in proportion to the development of the Imperial system, and, in an equal degree, the discontent of the young men with the ruling state of affairs grew stronger, gradually assumed a revolutionary character. With the daily appearance of such fruits of the system before them, intelligent men, who had once begun to ponder over the causes of those wretched conditions, were bound to recognise that it was the system itself, the unlimited monarchical system, the autocracy, in which the real, deep-lying origin of all the misery was to be found, and which for that reason should be abolished.

In other words, the evolution was proceeding on the usual lines. Despotism begat opposition, and the violence used against opponents in speech only brought to maturity the feeling that a system of government which permitted such arbitrary action was essentially bad. The greater the number of individuals ruined, the more did this feeling extend in ever-widening circles among the relatives and friends of those who had been struck down by the hand of the autocrat. This is particularly evident from Alexander Herzen's account of his first exile, to which, on the ground of certain occurrences at a festival at which he was not present, he was condemned before the so-called judicial proceedings in the matter could possibly have been completed. All the same, sentence of banishment was pronounced for participation in this festival! The description of justice under Nicholas I. given by Herzen in connection with his account of the process in question is worth quoting verbatim, so as to enable the reader to

judge to what extent other conditions have taken root during the reign of Nicholas II. It runs as follows: "The irregularity, arbitrariness, and brutal roughness which obtain in Russian judicial officialdom and among the Russian police are such that an accused person is less afraid of the punishment than of the judicial proceedings which precede it, and that he looks forward with impatience and in the light of a deliverance to the moment in which he is despatched to Siberia. His torment ends when his punishment begins. Just consider that three-fourths of the people who were arrested merely on suspicion and subsequently exonerated by the courts were compelled to undergo the same treatment as those really guilty.

"Peter III. abolished the secret court and the rack. Catherine II. suppressed torture; Alexander I. abolished it again, which is a proof that, in spite of formal suppression, its employment was being constantly resorted to.

"Enforced confessions are invalid in the eye of the law. An official who tortures an accused person is liable to the severest punishment, yet torture is the rule throughout Russia, from the Behring Straits to Tauris. When blows are of no avail other methods are adopted, such as unbearable heat, thirst, and highly salted foods.

"The authorities know all this. The governors hush it up. The Senate shuts its eyes. Ministers are silent. The Emperor, the Synod—they are all in the same boat."

This information, reaching the outer world with regard to the treatment of political prisoners, is instructive as to the measure of improvement attained in legal administration in the Russia of our day as compared with that as described by Herzen in his time.

Herzen was one of those men who could not fall in with the existing state of affairs. Born in 1812, the issue of a free union between a Russian landowner of high nobility

and a young South German lady, he grew up in his father's house in Moscow, became a student in the university of that city, and, at an early age, joined the circle of young oppositionists of whom we have already given an account. The most prominent members of this circle were Turgenieff, the well-known poet, Bielinski, the critic and journalist whose writings exercised immense influence in his day, and Bakunin, who, starting as a theoretical and philosophical oppositionist, crossed over to revolutionary socialism, to finish as a thoroughgoing anarchist, and whose teachings and writings have influenced to an extraordinary extent the social revolutionary movement in Russia.

It was Hegel's philosophy that first brought these and many other young men together, who, although they did not play so prominent a part as those above mentioned, nevertheless helped materially to promote the revolutionary development. Each and all of them sought to embody their philosophical theories in writing, and now and again these theories came into touch with reality, with the actual position in Russia, so that it was not long before the young radicals became objects of distrust on the part of the high authorities. Many of them were arrested; several, after being subjected to a farcical examination and trial, were exiled for a number of years, while others came off with milder punishments.

This was the right training for revolutionists. Both the exiles and their friends were forced to the conclusion that all the abuses that obtained must be swept away, to make room for a new and better order of society. In the course of a few years all these young men had entered more or less openly into the service of the revolution. Turgenieff quitted Russia, and beyond its borders wrote his deeply touching novels and romances, in which—the "Diary of a Hunter," for instance—he depicted in the most glaring light the misery

existing among the people, and thereby assisted, probably more than any other writer, in opening the eyes of the educated classes to the absolute necessity of liberating the serfs. Bielinski went to St. Petersburg, where, as a journalist, he held forth incessantly on this subject, but in such veiled language and in so artful a form as to keep clear of the "third section," and as a rule to get his articles passed by the censor. In the time of Nicholas I., Russians acquired the fine art of reading between the lines, of which Bielinski was one of the first teachers. He succumbed to excessive mental strain, and died comparatively young in St. Petersburg. Bakunin, like Turgenieff, left Russia, sojourned in various places in Europe, causing a sensation everywhere by his bold outspokenness and his ever developing anarchical doctrines, and, of course, by so doing attracted to himself the particular attention of the powers that be. The passport with which he left Russia having been declared forfeit, he was, at the pressing demand of the Tsar, expelled by the French Government in 1847. He collaborated for some time with Herzen in London, and finally settled in Switzerland as one of the most uncompromising leaders of the anarchists. Bakunin was an enthusiast, a fanatic gifted with rare intellectual keenness and the ability of explaining his ideas convincingly, steadfastly consistent in his logic, and free from any taint of egoism. This was the secret of the great influence which he exercised during his lifetime, and which he still exercises through his writings. He died in 1878 in Berne.

Alexander Herzen, who had been twice exiled, after obtaining a passport enabling him to travel abroad, finally settled in London, and there commenced to issue various publications with the view of rousing, by their means, the spirit of resistance and furthering revolutionary ideas and action in Russia. The best known of these publications was his monthly periodical, the *Kolokol* (the *Bell*), which in

a short time became a real social power in the empire of Nicholas, in spite of all the measures adopted to prevent its circulation.

While he was in personal communication with a number of distinguished and well-informed persons in Russia, Herzen possessed besides a telephone, as it were, in Turgenieff, through whom, thanks to the great poet's influential friends in St. Petersburg, he received news of all that passed, even in the most exclusive court circles. In a very short time the *Bell* was circulating in thousands of copies throughout Russia, where its readers might be counted in tens and hundreds of thousands. The trustworthy information which it always gave concerning all events of importance caused this periodical to be eagerly sought after in all classes of society, while Herzen's burning and brilliantly written articles on Russian affairs produced such a deep impression that the paper was read, not only by everyone imbued with liberalism, but also by the highest officials and even the Emperor himself. Herzen relentlessly exposed abuses of all kinds, pointed out the worst cases of peculation of public funds, threw a light on the scandalous system of bribery which flourished in all departments of the administration, and never ceased to recommend, with a variety of arguments and from different standpoints, the emancipation of the peasants as the first and most important of the social reforms to be carried out in Russia.

Things came to such a pass that highly placed officials, who had weighty reasons for dreading Herzen's revelations, made an attempt to tamper with the Tsar's paper. They determined, on the occasion of a bitter attack in the *Bell* on one of the highest court functionaries to have a special copy printed for the Tsar, excluding, of course, the offensive article; but the autocrat very soon after received a courteous letter from Herzen himself in which he enclosed the article

in question, printed separately, and enlightened the monarch as to the manner in which he had been deceived.

The influence of Herzen's periodical on public opinion in Russia can hardly be overestimated. It is true that the seed sown had as yet produced no direct crop, but the soil had been well prepared for a strong and rapid growth. In essential matters Russia still lay dumb and quiet, chiefly, perhaps, because the reactionary despotism of Nicholas had become still more bitter after the French revolution of 1848. All criticism of the Government, all printed expressions of opinion touching on politics, all private initiative in connection with any sphere of human or social activity, were tolerated less than ever. Stagnation was more sharply marked, reaction more oppressive and rigorous; but at the same time latent discontent grew ever more profound. The conviction that some change, some better time, must come was disseminated by the writings of Herzen and the other liberals among ever extending circles of the people; all unconsciously and instinctively, rather than by persuasion, it waxed so strong as to need but an impetus from without to bring this discontent to explosion point.

This impetus was given by the Crimean war. When war was declared, most Russians believed that their army would very speedily crush the troops of the allied Powers who had dared to tread the soil of Holy Russia. After all the years devoted to preparation, reorganisation, improvement, and drill, the Russian army was looked upon as being, as a matter of course, superior to all others. Although the financial position of the Empire was treated as a State secret, not to be divulged to any outsider, nevertheless the general conviction prevailed that the finances were in a flourishing condition. It was not long, however, before this illusion was rudely dispelled.

The allied armies were victorious in the Crimea. On the

Danube the despised Turks fought successfully against the Tsar's troops. The Russian ships of war had to be burnt or sunk in the harbour of Sebastopol to prevent their capture by the enemy. The Russian army was shut up in the fortress, the outer works of which had been deemed impregnable, but now proved to be in a miserable condition and in some cases hardly capable of defence.

All news unfavourable to the Government was carefully kept from the public, but in an incredibly short time it became known everywhere that even the general military organisation had failed to meet expectation; that, on the contrary, it had proved just as shiftless and corrupt as the civil administration. The impossibility of controlling the countless numbers of officials without the support of the educated public, which can only be secured through the medium of a free press, had resulted in as much depravity in military affairs as in civil. Plunder had been, and was still, going on everywhere. Stores of all kinds which should be forthcoming had never existed. The ammunition had been largely tampered with. The troops were wanting in clothes, boots, and other articles of equipment. The commissariat service had cost, and was still costing, huge sums, but had, nevertheless, proved incapable in every respect. Soon after the war commenced even the pecuniary resources were exhausted. Recourse was had to the issue of paper money in enormous quantities, whose exchange value, however, fell very soon to such an extent that this method of replenishing the State coffers ceased in the long run to be practicable. The entire system which Nicholas had built up with such remorseless consistency proved, in a word, to be an unmitigated failure as regarded the external power of Russia.

Then came an awakening, as sudden as it was universal, from the meek resignation into which the people had sunk,

at once demonstrating how respect for the autocracy had been completely undermined on all sides. To all and sundry among the educated classes it became immediately evident that the drill-sergeant regime which Nicholas had cultivated had brought Russia to the brink of the abyss; that the enemies of the Government, liberals and revolutionists, whose writings had been read for years, were right in their contention that nothing but a fundamental change and liberal reforms in all departments could rehabilitate Russia and raise her to the rank of a civilised nation. All was now undone. All the infinite patience which had been displayed under this intolerable military despotism, in the belief that it would ensure the political power of the land and people, had proved fruitless. Russia was hopelessly beaten long before the end of the war, not because her soldiers were worse, less brave and enduring than before, but because the leadership, commissariat, organisation, the whole beautiful edifice to which all the intellectual and material forces of the Empire had been sacrificed, was erected on such a treacherous foundation that the first shock caused it to collapse.

Discontent became all at once as general and bitter as the previous resignation had been profound and sincere. Even now this discontent neither could nor dare express itself publicly; but in every house and family affairs of state were discussed in a manner and in language which a few months back would have led to many years' imprisonment or exile.

Respect for the autocracy disappeared hand in hand with the terror of the autocrat. Scornful sallies, in prose and verse, against the Government and its officials, against the army and its officers, against the commander-in-chief and the Tsar himself, were written wholesale and circulated in thousands of copies. To show to what lengths people ventured, we reproduce here the prose translation by Mackenzie Wallace of the concluding lines from an article in

verse, widely circulated at that time, in which the accession of Nicholas I. to the throne, his system of government, and the former resignation of his people are described:—

> "Stand forth, O Tsar, before the judgment seat of God and history. Thou hast mercilessly trodden the truth under foot, thou hast oppressed liberty, and hast been the slave of thine own passions. In thine arrogance and caprice, thou hast called out the might of Russia and compelled the world to take up arms against us. Bow thy head before thy brethren, and humble thyself in the dust. Sue for pardon, and seek counsel. Throw thyself into the arms of the people. There is no other salvation for thee."

Effusions of this kind were in circulation all over Russia, nor could either censor or police stop their publication or lay hands on their authors.

The long-suppressed discontent was not only asserting itself, but was now following a downright revolutionary course. The efforts and labours of the free-thinking men of the revolution were bearing unexpectedly early fruit. In all Russia there existed but one opinion, viz., that the time for far-reaching reforms had arrived, and that the first and most important item was the emancipation of the peasants.

Such was the temper prevailing in his empire when Nicholas I. died in 1855. His reactionary despotism had brought Russia so far that neither he nor any other Tsar would have been able any longer to maintain such a system of government in the face of the universal, profound exasperation. To avoid revolutionary outbreaks a way of escape was absolutely necessary, and this was found in the liberalism which characterised the first portion of the reign of Alexander II. The neglected and oppressed intellectual forces of Russia found employment in many fields of social

activity, and if the results of this activity were not so great and abundant as they might have been had the liberal regime lasted longer, these intellectual forces were, at any rate, diverted for many years to come from all revolutionary tendencies. Under Nicholas I. the revolutionary and anti-governmental spirit was born, and had thriven to such an extent as to permeate all ranks of Russian society. The reforms of Alexander II. stemmed the revolutionary movement. It depended only on him to put an end to it at once and for ever, instead of endowing it with greater vitality than it had ever possessed before.

THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER II.

CHAPTER III.

THE ERA OF REFORM.

THE governmental system of Nicholas I. had been the cause of the revolutionary spirit in all classes of Russian society. It had shown how impossible it is for a monarchical, irresponsible ruler to find instruments for the administration of his power, that is, instruments unselfish and honest enough to work without control for the general welfare of country and people, and not for their own hand. It was generally acknowledged that society only, otherwise the people itself, could exercise the necessary control, and that, consequently, the concentration of all power in one individual, with a heterogeneous collection of officials under him, was pernicious; or, in other words, that absolute monarchy, the Tsardom, could not promote the development of the Empire and the welfare of the people. Hence there was a general demand for a change of system.

So strong was the conviction, at the time the Tsar died, that such a change was absolutely necessary, and indeed very imminent, that a general apprehension existed of a revolt of the serfs. When the levies of soldiers were being raised for the Crimean war serious disturbances took place among the peasants, so serious, in fact, that it was found necessary to despatch whole regiments with artillery against the rebels. When the death of Nicholas became known the people showed no trace of that sentiment which the news of the decease of an emperor usually calls forth. It was as if the masses felt themselves released from an intolerable

burden. The other classes of society were frightened. All were agreed that a change must come, and the thought that it might have to be effected by violence inspired terror, though this only lent additional strength to the conviction that now was the time for the great reforms to be introduced.

That the first and most important reform must be the removal of serfdom was universally admitted and expressed. It was seen that the co-operation of the great body of the nation could not be relied upon so long as more than ten millions of individuals remained without rights and subject to the arbitrary will of their masters. Equality before the law, the demand for education and culture for all, the right of the people to manage their own affairs, the free expression of opinion on the Government, and the abolition of administrative tyranny—these were the claims which it was everywhere thought should be set up as the fundamental conditions which must be fulfilled before a permanent improvement in the situation could become possible.

From the standpoint of the Russian autocracy such claims were absolutely revolutionary, inasmuch as they aimed at a legal limitation of the autocrat's power. Thus far had the development of matters advanced in spite of the unspeakable despotism of Nicholas, or, perhaps, in consequence of it. When he ascended the throne, a handful of men, a few hundred at most, had dared to insist upon a curtailment of the autocratic power and even attempted to compel this curtailment by force of arms. When his successor entered on the government the demands of the "Dekabrists" were again taken up by all people with any claims to intelligence and so energetically pressed that they had to be responded to. The new Tsar, Alexander II., was disposed to meet them. He perceived just as clearly as others did that the system of centralisation which had arisen under his father's government could not possibly be upheld, that he must call

to his aid the resources and co-operation of the people, but that that people must first be set at liberty. As early as 1856, shortly after the conclusion of peace, Alexander gave some indication of his intentions in the remarks he addressed to the representatives of the nobility assembled in Moscow. He said: "In order to dispel certain unfounded rumours, I consider it necessary to tell you that I do not at present entertain the idea of abolishing serfdom, but, as you yourselves know, the existing system of serf ownership cannot be maintained for any length of time. It is better that serfdom should be removed from above instead of waiting for it to be abolished from below. I recommend you, gentlemen, to study the means by which this may be done and to convey my words to the nobility for their consideration."

The Emperor wished and hoped that the landowners themselves would take the initiative by submitting a petition for the suppression of serfdom. The noble landowners, however, showed no inclination to do this. Neither in Moscow nor in other parts of the Empire were they to be moved by any hints to formulate a request for such a Government measure. At length, in the year 1857, the Government took into consideration petitions from landowners in several of the West Russian, or rather Polish, provinces, with reference to the revision of sundry decrees issued under Nicholas touching the relations between landowners and serfs. Although these petitioners had not asked for the suppression of serfdom, it was deemed convenient to construe their petitions in that sense. Accordingly in his answer to them in the notorious "rescript" to Nazimoff, Governor-General of Lithuania, Alexander declared his intention to abolish serfdom and granted permission to the petitioners to form committees for drawing up proposals as to the method of carrying out the reforms. Four days later the

Minister of the Interior, acting on the secret orders of the Tsar, issued a circular to all the governors and marshals of the nobility in Russia informing them that the nobles in the province of Lithuania had admitted "the necessity of liberating the peasants," and that "this their noble intention had given his Majesty particular satisfaction." A copy of the rescript and the fundamental regulations to be observed accompanied the circular "in case the nobility of other provinces should express a similar wish," and a few weeks afterwards the Emperor, to remove all further doubt, stated in a public speech that he cherished the hope "of successfully accomplishing the work with the help of God and the co-operation of the nobility."

The enthusiasm excited in Russia by this first great step on the road to reform was overwhelming. The press, which, all unpunished, left unheeded the censorship regulations enacted by Nicholas, harped on the fact that a new and brilliant era in the development of the Empire was about to open, and expatiated on all the improvements and reforms which would follow in the wake of this first step in liberalism. As yet no one ventured to allude openly to the expectation, universally entertained and discussed everywhere in private, of the establishment of a constitution. The idea was that the nobles, who, in ever increasing numbers, were declaring their willingness to forego the advantages which they derived from serfdom, were well entitled, as compensation for themselves and other subjects, to claim a share in the government; and it was generally believed that the immediate consequence of peasant emancipation would be the drawing up of a constitution.

Unfortunately, however, a reaction soon set in. The committees appointed to set forth definite proposals for the execution of the reforms proceeded very slowly; and, in exalted quarters, a feeling existed which was by no means

insusceptible to the influence of those in whom the idea of emancipation had created a sense of dissatisfaction and resistance.

The nobles throughout the Empire had obeyed the call of the Tsar and formed committees who drew up their own independent proposals. These were forwarded to the committee of revision, sitting in St. Petersburg and composed chiefly of bureaucratic elements who aimed above all things at safeguarding with anxious solicitude the interests of the autocracy and bureaucracy, or, in other words, their own.

Those landlords who, after some slight hesitation, had grasped the situation and understood the conditions as making for the general weal, and who for the most part had set themselves honestly and willingly to the work of carrying through the reforms, were gradually set aside and ignored by the Government officials. On the other hand, the influence of the minority who were working against emancipation made itself increasingly felt in connection with the details of the law, though it never occurred to anyone to attempt to induce the Tsar to recall his promise of peasant liberation. The suppression of serfdom could be easily managed in many ways satisfactory both to peasants and landowners.

Amongst the peasants themselves the tradition still lingered of a time when no such thing as servitude existed in Russia, when there was a numerous class of small landowners composed of real peasants, when such as possessed no land enjoyed the right and liberty to seek work wherever they chose. The ideas of the common folk respecting the transition from freedom to slavery were very obscure, and could not be otherwise. At the present day the idea is widely prevalent, even among educated Russians, that serfdom was first instituted by a ukase of the half-blooded Tartar Boris Godunoff, who made himself Tsar in 1598 and reigned till 1605, and who, according to this view, is alone responsible

for the peasants in Russia becoming bound to the soil (*glebæ adscripti*).

As a matter of fact, the results of the investigations of learned Russians have proved this not to be the case. According to Belaïeff, probably the most eminent of these inquirers, the legislation of Boris Godunoff on the subject of the peasants was merely a ratification and partial extension in a new direction of a gradually established and developed condition of things. The interests of the various petty princes, the large landowners, and lastly of the Muscovite State, and their need of constantly available labourers and recruits for the troops, had resulted in the ever increasing restriction of the freedom of the peasantry and common people, at first by the arbitrary and violent methods of individuals, and subsequently by orders and decrees seeking to legalise these violent methods.

In Russia, just as in other countries, bondsmen had existed from time immemorial; prisoners of war and persons in debt or extreme distress became slaves, by compulsion or of their own will. The bulk of the population, however, consisted of freemen, among whom, just as elsewhere, a distinction as between soldiers and workers was gradually established. In the course of time the latter came to be considered as bound to support the soldiery, whereby they gradually fell into a position of dependence on those who were masters or had made themselves masters and so become the principal owners of the soil. The workers, however, were free, and could accept employment wherever they liked, and by-and-by it became the custom with them to take service for a whole year at a time. St. George's Day in November became what we should call hiring day, on which the workmen had the right to quit their employment. This custom appears to have been general in all parts of Russia.

The more the Muscovite Tsardom extended its power and asserted itself against the Tartar khans, the greater grew its need for soldiers and funds and, consequently, its demands on the Boyars, landowners and petty princes, vassals of the Tsar.

These, of course, in their turn were compelled to make relatively heavy claims on their own people, the peasantry, whose burdens increased more and more according as the Empire expanded and the Tsars extended their sway over new territories. In these new territories, lying distant from the centre of government in Moscow, numerous and favourable opportunities presented themselves to the sorely burdened Muscovite peasants of becoming landowners and independent; and hence it gradually came to pass that, instead of hiring themselves out, they departed, first in units, then in small companies, and later in multitudes, from the districts where the proceeds of their labour as well as their bodies were claimed for purposes of state which were indifferent and possibly hateful to them.

Herein lay an evident danger to the Tsardom, which began to cast about for means to stop this desire to emigrate. The readiest method available was, of course, to prohibit such emigration. At the outset the prohibitions were temporary, valid for a limited period only, and often applied to certain districts; but in the course of time these temporary prohibitions became more and more frequent, and were always being extended over longer periods, till at last they were made permanent and embraced the whole Empire. With the extension of the Empire's boundaries serfdom also spread over a wider area till it became the rule in the greater part of the Russian dominion, especially European Russia, and absolutely so in those districts where the institution first originated, namely, Great Russia, with Moscow as centre.

It was only one phase of this development that Boris

Godunoff sanctioned, just as, before and after his time, other Tsars have sanctioned other phases of it, up to Catherine II., in whose reign serfdom was introduced into certain parts of Little Russia, and the serfs were rendered still further dependent on their masters. Hence naturally arose another phase of the development. From being at first only *glebæ adscripti*—that is, bound to the soil, but enjoying full civil rights in all other respects—the serfs came little by little more under the control of their masters, until ultimately the latter fancied they had the right to sell their serfs individually and collectively away from the soil to which they had been bound; so that thenceforward they found themselves robbed not only of their civil, but also of their most elementary, rights.

But just the very circumstance that serfdom had not been introduced at one stroke several hundred years previously, but had evolved gradually from century to century, accounted for the fact that the recollection of a time when the liberty and the right to own land really existed for the Russian people still lived on among the peasant class. It was only needful to hint at the possibility of restoring such a state of things in order to breathe fresh life into the old tradition and prepare the ground for hopes and aspirations of the peasants.

The newspaper press, in the years preceding the emancipation of the serfs, took good care to provide their claims with a foundation of actual facts and historical data. Journalists and professors alike vied with each other in investigating the subject of serfdom and the former status of peasantry. The results of these researches were published in periodicals, newspapers, and pamphlets, were accepted as valid, even in circles where criticism might have been expected, and filtered gradually down to the lowest strata of the populace. In a short time the demand became general that the peasants

should not only receive their personal freedom, but should also be provided with land to convert them into landowners and render them independent.

At this stage of affairs it was only natural that the interests of the peasants and landowners should be diametrically opposed to one another. As a rule, the serfs cultivated a certain portion of the estate for their own benefit, and in return were compelled to place a certain portion of their time, otherwise labour, at the disposal of the landowner. By different ukases issued from time to time the Government had endeavoured to regulate these relations in order to prevent the serfs from being too thoroughly exploited by their masters; but no real change was effected. Other serfs, as, for instance, all so-called Crown peasants and numbers belonging to private owners, paid an annual money tax, *obrok*, and could then settle wherever they liked, while others again, the servants proper, were absolutely dependent on their masters, being kept by them and in every way the worst off. Of serfs belonging to the Crown there were some twenty-two and a half million "souls," and pretty much the same number on the estates of private owners.

Now the serfs held the simple opinion that the land, which they and their fathers had cultivated, really belonged to them, and that only part of their labour had been the property of the landowner, not the land, which, consequently, should be transferred to them then and there. The landowners, on the other hand, thought they would be suffering quite enough detriment by the loss of labour, and, therefore, opposed the claims of the serfs to the soil—unless, of course, suitable compensation were paid them.

It was just round this point that the fiercest struggle raged. The serfs on the Crown lands were more or less disregarded in the discussions, and so were the domestic slaves, who could lay no claim to land. A compromise which

apparently reconciled the interests of landowners and serfs was the outcome of the conflict between the two parties, a compromise which, in a short time, turned out very unfavourable for the peasants, inasmuch as to it was to be traced one of the chief causes of the ever growing misery of the Russian people, as well as of the dissatisfaction which in our day rouses in this people the desire for a new revolution.

The ukase concerning the abolition of serfdom was issued on the 19th February (3rd March), 1861, but only affected the serfs on the estates of private owners and the domestic slaves; the latter had to continue two years longer in the same relation to their masters, after which they were at liberty to seek employment wherever they chose. The first-named serfs were, however, to enter at once into the full enjoyment of civil rights and to receive a certain portion of land which was pretty much the same in extent as that which they had formerly cultivated for their own benefit. But this portion of land was to go with full rights of ownership to the commune — the *mir* — not to its individual members, neither were the former serfs to receive the land gratis.

The institution of the *mir* had an ancestry going back to the remotest times in Russia, where practical communistic principles are still prevalent among the people in some localities. This arrangement was very convenient for the landowners. Instead of a crowd of individuals, they had now only to deal with a single entity, the *mir*, whose members were answerable to the landowners on the principle of "one for all, all for one," but were, on that account, entitled to regulate their own internal affairs, appoint their own leaders, and, in a word, form a society that was in many respects autonomous. This institution was now, in consequence of the law of emancipation, placed under the protection of the Government.

This consummation was the result, partly of considerations of practical convenience, but partly also, and in the first place, of purely theoretical points of view. Those social reformers who had participated so zealously in the public discussions concerning reforms of all varieties believed they had discovered in the *mir* an arcanum likely to counteract all dangers of the social evolution going on in Western lands as represented by the rise and progress of a working class proletariat. Their text was, that by making the liberated serfs members of communes owning land collectively they would be chained thereto by their own interests, and in this way the creation of an unstable working class, open to all kinds of injurious influences and evil teachings, would be avoided.

These arguments were acclaimed on all sides as a new kind of gospel. The conviction prevailed everywhere that Russia had found in the *mir* the clue to all social development, and the Government accordingly proceeded on the lines of this conviction, entertained as it was by the vast majority of the people. Thus land was bestowed on the *mir* for the benefit of the manumitted peasants, but not on the peasants themselves. The latter, who had been accustomed from pagan times to joint ownership, displayed no kind of dissatisfaction with this stipulation in the Act of Emancipation.

It was, however, quite another matter with the provision relating to the indemnity to be paid for the land received. There was not a single man among the peasants but believed that the soil which the serfs had cultivated should and would be given to them for nothing. According to their view, which was by no means lacking in historical justification, the masters had originally received their land from the Tsar as compensation for services rendered to him, not by way of inheritance or ownership. Moreover, several Tsars had invested the masters with the right of taxing the

peasants in labour and money, but always under the same conditions. In the eyes of the peasants this right had nothing to do with the possession of land, which the Tsar had now taken away from the landowners. Their discussions on this subject turned on the question to what extent the property of the landowners should be awarded to them or what large portion thereof they could regard as their own; and now the Act of Emancipation stipulated that even for this their own property they must pay ransom.

If only this tribute had been in the least reasonable the peasants might, in the long run, have more readily acquiesced in what they considered an injustice; but at first no particular change on any material point took place in their condition. The declaration of emancipation was promulgated long before the details of the reform could be worked out and ratified. During the first two years of the new order of things the peasants had to pay interest either in money or in the shape of work for the land reserved by the *mir*, and it was not until 1863 that the decree for the redemption of such land was issued, while even this redemption was made dependent on the consent of the landowners. If the landowners were willing to surrender the land to the former serfs against payment of redemption money, then the latter were bound to redeem a certain minimum area; but should the landowners not be so inclined they could not be compelled to part with the land. In 1863, after the Polish rebellion, a ukase was published binding the landowners in the Polish provinces to make such agreements if the peasants wished it; but in Russia proper this engagement was not stipulated for till the year 1883, under Alexander III.

The redemption money for the land was reckoned on the value of the former work of the serfs in proportion to the parcel of land which they received, or in capital at the sum on which the said value yielded 6 per cent. This sum the

Government paid in interest-bearing bonds, the whole amount if the transaction between landowners and peasants was voluntary, but only four-fifths if the landowners made use of their rights and compelled the peasants to redeem the land. Later on the Government levied the redemption money on the peasants, who had to pay one-fifth in cash and then, for a period of forty-nine years, 6 per cent. of the remaining four-fifths which would thus be paid off. Supposing, for instance, that a *mir* received 900 desiatines of land estimated at a payment of three roubles per year per desiatine on the above-mentioned basis of calculation, or altogether 2,700 roubles per annum, the redemption money for the 900 desiatines taken up would amount to 45,000 roubles, otherwise the capital yielding 2,700 roubles at 6 per cent. Of this capital the *mir* had to pay one-fifth, or 9,000 roubles, in cash, and 6 per cent. per annum on the remaining 36,000 for interest and amortisation over a period of forty-nine years. But 6 per cent. on 36,000 makes 2,160, and this amount multiplied by forty-nine gives 105,480, so that the *mir*, after paying 9,000 in cash for its 900 desiatines of land worth 45,000, would have to pay altogether 114,840 roubles.

To this had still to be added taxes of various kinds of which the serfs had never dreamt, communal and Government taxes, the most oppressive of which were the unwarrantable Customs duties laid on the most indispensable articles, such as salt and iron. There is, consequently, not much need to go into further details in order to show that the emancipation of the peasants as carried out in practice did not, thanks to many secondary influences, in any way improve their material position, but rather so aggravated it that the distress over a great part of the land became permanent.

The liberation of the serfs on the Crown domains did not

take place till the year 1866, when their material position was made identical with that of the rest; it was far from favourable, and they soon joined in expressing dissatisfaction at the changed conditions.

There were many more grounds for the discontent of the peasants apart from the oppressive land tribute. As we have already mentioned, the Government had constituted the *mir* as a body responsible for all the imposts laid upon the peasants, but for all that could not leave it as it had been before, setting up at the side of and over it another newly formed body called the *volost*. The *mir* was a community quite independent of the Government officials; and its head, called the *starosta*, was elected by the peasants themselves. The new body, the *volost*, organised for administrative purposes, consisted of a number of *mirs*, and corresponded in a general way to the ecclesiastical community. In this case also the head of the *volost*, the *starschina*, was elected by the peasants, but, as he stood in direct relations with the officials, the latter, and particularly the *ispravnik*, the district chief of police, had little difficulty in acquiring a dominating influence over the *starschina*, who at last came to be more and more dependent on the officials and the police for his election. In this way the independence of the *mir*, to the ever growing discontent of the peasants, shrank to such an extent that its existence is now hardly worth alluding to.

Then again, the distribution of the land which the *mirs* had to receive gave rise to dissensions which are still unsettled. At first this ticklish obligation was laid upon the landowners, who, in their interest in the great reform and its accomplishment, did their best to solve the difficulty in a just and wise manner. So long as they were to the fore, the work of distribution proceeded without any noteworthy friction and to the satisfaction of the peasants.

The majority of the landowners adopted the method of insisting on the serfs taking immediate possession of their plots of land. Although this method entitled them to receive only four-fifths of the redemption money at which the land had been valued, yet in some cases these four-fifths represented more than the market price, and, besides, the Government bonds which they received for the surrendered property enabled them to put their own entangled affairs in order. The result was that the delicate process of separating the peasants' share of land from the property of their former masters encountered at first fewer difficulties than had been expected.

On the other hand, the voluntary distributing officials, who had worked out of pure interest for the cause, began one after the other to disregard their duty as soon as the first and hardest part of the task was ended, and returned to their own ordinary occupations, their place being taken by others who undertook the work because of the money attached to it. These took exactly the same line of conduct as all Government officials, both with regard to bribery and in every other respect. Wheresoever the settlement had not yet been concluded—and this might be said to apply to nearly all the provinces—the new distributing officials succeeded in introducing working methods which were particularly profitable to themselves, while, at the same time, the dissatisfaction of the peasants respecting the realisation of the great reform and their distrust of the Government intention continually increased. At last things reached such a point that by a ukase issued in 1874 the settlement of the work of distribution was entrusted to the *ispravniks*, the chiefs of the district police!

The principal object of the reform, the conversion of the serfs, who formed the majority of the people, into free independent men, was thus thwarted every time the detailed provisions respecting the practical accomplishment of the

reform were decreed and put into force. Alexander II. fell more and more under the influence of conservative views. He saw very well that the path of reform on which he had entered must inevitably lead to a democratic form of society, with the rights of the people ever extending. Because he perceived this he allowed himself to be the more easily swayed by those who represented to him that extended rights for the people would infallibly give rise to the demand for more until the autocracy itself would be called in question. Alexander became amenable to such arguments, especially after the Polish insurrection of 1863. His zeal for reform gradually ebbed away. The liberal-minded men who, in the early years, had co-operated with him so enthusiastically had, one after the other, to give place to counsellors of more conservative, not to say reactionary, tendencies, and the influence of these gentry succeeded in inducing him to adopt measures calculated to diminish, if not to destroy, the effects of his earlier reforms.

Before Alexander II. succumbed altogether to such influences, two very important measures of reform had been initiated, only to be thrown overboard later, like that of the peasants' emancipation. The most important or most promising of these reforms was the establishment of communal self-government, known as the *zemstvo*.

The only step towards local self-government which had hitherto been noticed in modern Russia was the provincial assemblies of the nobility; but these never acquired the importance that might have been theirs had the nobility vigorously demanded their rights of the Tsar. Consequently the institution of the *zemstvo* was looked upon as quite a new scheme, which in the course of time might really conduce to the promotion of self-government for the people if it were only to develop naturally and peacefully.

The *zemstvo* councils were divided into two classes : the

smaller or district *zemstvo* and the greater, which included the whole province. In the case of the former, three categories of members were chosen: one from the land-owners, another from the *volosts*, who represented the peasants, and a third from the municipal corporations of the district. For the greater *zemstvo* councils the members were taken from the district *zemstvos*, each of which contributed either seven or eight representatives. The functions of these councils consisted in the determination of questions relating to the maintenance of roads and bridges, primary education, general sanitary administration, together with the provision of funds for these purposes, and finally the appointment of justices of the peace.

The establishment of this institution was hailed with extraordinary expectancy by all the educated classes, who believed and hoped that Russia would now at last be freed from the corrupt bureaucracy which had grown so intolerable under Nicholas I. This would undoubtedly have been the case if only the *zemstvos* had been left to work quietly within their appointed limits. But no such thing happened. For barrack accommodation for the troops, for the provincial police, and for many other non-communal and non-governmental objects the administration had appropriated so large a proportion of the funds which the *zemstvo* councils could have raised by the imposition of taxes that but very little was left to meet the actual general requirements of the commune. Moreover, the functions of these councils were being constantly curtailed by a stream of circulars and ukases, while, at the same time, the civil co-operative work set on foot by them in "permissible" departments, as, for instance, that of public instruction, was harassed and fettered in all possible ways. The power of the *zemstvos* to carry out anything of importance has been reduced to such a degree that the whole institution, in its present state, is not much

more than an empty shell. Nevertheless, it costs just as much to maintain them as if they were living bodies, and, now that they are partly under the control of the Government officials, they have become an additional, although indirect, object of dissatisfaction.

The same fate befell the great judicial reforms which Alexander II. initiated in 1862. The judicial system had sunk so low under Nicholas I. that the words "judge" and "knave" were almost synonymous terms. There was no more talk of justice; the influence of the higher officials determined the results of actions in favour of those who were able to command such influence, which could be secured by liberality bestowed in the proper quarter. In smaller matters the procedure was still more simple: you just bought your verdict straight from the judge, and if anyone should happen not to be satisfied with his judgment it could be changed in the same or a similar way "by administrative process." For the administration, the Government, was of much more account than law and right.

It was admitted by everyone that no enduring reforms could be effected in any direction without a reorganisation of the judicial system. A ukase issued in the same year, 1862, commanded such a reorganisation altogether after the European model, chiefly French but partly English.

As the lowest court for unimportant cases the office of justice of the peace was established, to which appointment was made by selection only, and for which no juridical education was necessary. For cases of a more important character the collegiate courts were available, whose members were chosen by the Government from among persons with a juridical training. These two subordinate courts could appeal to a higher court, viz., from the justices of the peace to the monthly assembly of all justices of the peace of the district, and from the latter, called the district court, to

the Palace of Justice (Sudebnaia Palata). The highest court was the Senate, sitting as a "court of revision," of course always excepting the Emperor, who could annul the judgment of all other courts. For criminal offences juries were instituted.

It is clear that the introduction of fully fledged institutions of so complicated a character as these was bound to encounter a mass of difficulties, because the majority of the people was wanting in all preliminary knowledge necessary to understand the true meaning of such institutions. In spite of this, however, and notwithstanding the unjust judgments at first frequently given—especially by juries, but also by the justices of the peace—the reorganisation of the judicial system constituted so great a step in advance and did so much good, that it would undoubtedly in course of time have led the Russian people to form a conception of the meaning of legal administration and justice other than that formerly accepted. But here again the courts were not allowed, any more than other institutions, to pursue their functions independently of the Government. The administrative process of the law, which had never entirely ceased to work, predominated during the second half of Alexander's reign in all cases whose issues were of great importance to the Government; and if this or that person, possessing sufficiently influential connections, should happen to be dissatisfied with the result of some lawsuit, he could always manage to procure a special Imperial order placing his business above laws and judges, without any consideration of justice.

This system ultimately prevailed, and now the "administrative process" completely overshadows all legal procedure, so much so that no Russian citizen is sure of his liberty, life, or property, no matter how exactly and conscientiously he may have fulfilled the provisions of the law.

It would far exceed the limits of this work to attempt to show how all the reforms which were introduced or commenced during the early years of the reign of Alexander II. came to be gradually, and with his consent, so restricted in their action, that the system of government, even in his lifetime, was just as reactionary as in the time of his father and predecessor. It was only in connection with Finland, when he convoked the Finnish Estates, that Alexander continued to display to the end of his days the same liberalism as formerly. In Russia his liberalism was of short duration.

He had, nevertheless, done valiant service by rousing and setting in motion the intellectual forces of Russia. The idea of another more manly, dignified existence than that obtaining under the sceptre of an autocrat, of liberty and justice for all, of the right of the people to work out its own development, of constitutional self-government from the Russian point of view—in a word the idea of a revolution as the sole remedy had spread far and wide in the early years of Alexander's reign, and struck root among certain sections of the population, who until then had never given a single thought to the political administration and form of government. This was soon evident to anyone who looked closely into the social symptoms of Russia. The discontent evinced at the hesitation of which, shortly after the Polish insurrection, the Tsar gave signs in connection with the accomplishment of the reforms already begun, gave a direct impulse to the revolutionary efforts which have never ceased. Horror at the frightful atrocities committed in Poland and the well-founded fear that the era of reform had come to an end caused a fermentation which found expression in the attempt of Karakosoff to shoot the Tsar in the "Summer Garden" in 1866. That was a warning of the sharpest kind. But, far from recognising any warning, Alexander

was thenceforward less inclined than ever to carry out reforms, more irresolute than ever as to the policy to pursue, and, as a consequence, more incapable of resisting the influence of those who, to his and Russia's ruin, were dragging him deeper and deeper into reaction.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT UNDER ALEXANDER II.

THE hope that reforms of a drastic character would be continued until the whole constitution of the Russian State should be ultimately transformed was raised too high in the early years of Alexander's reign not to awaken thoughts of the possibility of their being realised, despite the apparent inclination of the Government to stand still. Under the despotic regime of Nicholas such a palpable proof of the impossibility of the absolutist system as that provided by the Crimean war was required to encourage the discontented to speak more openly of the means of effecting a change; and now, only ten years later, the merest sign of retrogression from the liberal regime sufficed to revive the spirit of opposition and give it voice. During the last few years rapid progress had been made in the development of affairs, and the people's mood had assumed quite another complexion.

Karakosoff's attempt was a proof of the unrest that had allen upon everyone in Russia as soon as the first signs of stagnation were noticed. Secret societies sprang up at once in all the large towns of the Empire; the chances of a revolution were discussed on all sides; here and there regicide was hinted at; and everywhere the talk was of the need of more strenuous effort to destroy the seeds of reaction and further the cause of reform. In the years immediately following the execution of Karakosoff this unrest increased in the same degree as the policy of the Government became more reactionary, without anything of a decisive character being

done on either side. The revolutionary spirit found vent chiefly in the way of discussion, and the *volte face* of the Government displayed itself more in the abandonment of liberalism than in active reactionary measures.

During these years—the late sixties—the most flourishing and robust movement was that which Turganieff styled "Nihilism," a designation which came to be applied later to the real revolutionary agitation, although in this case it referred to two absolutely different things. The genuine or original Nihilism was a philosophical and literary movement, dating from the time when all the intellectual forces of Russia awoke to life. It was not a political but a moral opposition to all the unnecessary fetters imposed by society on its members, who therefore championed the right of the individual as against society. Nihilism was, in a few words, a denial made in the name of individual liberty of all obligations with which society, family life, and religion burden the individual.

This movement was, of course, an outcome of the general reaction against the extremely narrow-minded, restricted ideas which had their origin and growth under the despotism of Nicholas. These early Nihilists, however, neither thought nor spoke of revolutionary acts. They confined themselves to the propagation of the views which they championed each in his place, by his life, actions, and words, without troubling himself particularly about the sayings, doings, or fate of the rest of society.

But although these original Nihilists were not revolutionists in the political sense, they none the less did their best, by their teachings, to prepare the ground for their successors, the real revolutionists, who were not long in appearing on the scene.

These precursors were to be found in the crowds of young men, and especially young women, who in the late sixties,

and still more in the following decade, flocked to the universities and high schools in order to equip themselves for a free and independent position in life. The Nihilists preached the equality of the wife with her husband in every respect, equal rights to education and study, and equal rights to work and act in the world, these teachings of theirs being acclaimed everywhere. The landowners and other members of the cultivated classes were no longer able to lead the life they led before the emancipation of the peasants. They and their families found themselves suddenly confronted by claims on the part of society that had never before existed, and the younger generation not only admitted these claims, but were enthusiastically ready to fulfil them.

The families and the Government at first joined hands in forcibly preventing the women from entering public life. No Russian high school was allowed to admit young ladies as students, and parents did their utmost to prevent their daughters from taking private lessons, while passports to enable them to visit university cities abroad were refused. At this time recourse was frequently had to the remarkable expedient of a fictitious marriage. Young men married girls whom they hardly knew, and for whom they had still less affection, merely to provide them with a passport and the opportunity of acquiring in European schools that scientific training which their own country denied them.

The women showed in this and many other ways that they were in deadly earnest in their demand for the right of education and training. In St. Petersburg, after a long and bitter struggle, they extorted the right to attend the private lectures of university professors, and a short time afterwards they obtained permission to travel alone in order to seek admittance to foreign universities.

This was the signal for a regular exodus of young people to Germany and France, and especially to Switzerland, where

the university of Zurich became the headquarters of studious Russian youth, and before very long the centre of Russian socialism. Full of enthusiasm for their people and its welfare, the students of both sexes belonging to the different faculties discussed, of course amongst themselves, all kinds of social problems, studied social-political works, made themselves familiar with the writings of such authors as Marx, Prudhomme, Bakunin, and others of the then modern champions of socialism, whose teachings took ever greater and greater hold upon them.

In Russia itself these doctrines had also begun to gain ground. The generation which in the reform years had been roused to reflection and inoculated with zeal for the affairs of the people, which called for a national constitution and a form of administration that should protect the interests of all, saw itself robbed of all chance of such work and effort for which it had prepared itself. The Government would not hear of private initiative and independent action of citizens in general affairs. It thought that it had already gone too far in encouraging democratic activity, and tightened the rein in every direction. The liberal elements, which were now much more numerous and far more democratic, saw themselves again restricted in their theoretical discussions. Their discussions, however, arose from a foundation other than they possessed before. The literature of socialism, which attracted so much attention throughout Europe, was in its brightest bloom. It could not but have influence over those people, quite young for the most part, who studied it minutely and asked themselves in what way could the best action be taken for the welfare of the people, whose wretched conditions of existence they had daily and hourly occasion to observe, and to whom the Government denied further help to improve their lot. Socialism was universally seized upon by the younger generation with an

enthusiasm for new ideas which it would seem can only be displayed by Russians.

To be a socialist was tantamount to being a revolutionist. To assist in the circulation of such doctrines meant entering the field in open fight against the Government, the autocracy which would not tolerate even the expression of a wish for another constitution—much less active work for one. Whenever the young socialists endeavoured to propagate their views they soon became acquainted with the fact that the Government had no notion of permitting the circulation of such ideas among the orthodox people, but was, on the contrary, determined to adopt the severest measures to put an end to such action.

The year 1871 was a memorable one both for the Government and the revolutionists. The attempt of the communists to bring about a social revolution, and the excesses committed in their struggle, made a powerful impression on Alexander II., who made a further decided turn to the right and surrendered himself entirely to reaction. Those who had murmured at his reforms found him more than ever ready to sanction any kind of measures calculated to nullify the effects of these reforms, and most inclined to proceed with the greatest severity against all those who by word or deed ventured to conspire against the existing Government. The "third section" was very soon as powerful as under Nicholas I.; arrests, abuse of power, and oppression were just as intolerable as before.

The revolutionists, however, were emboldened by the action and struggles of the French communists. From mere words they advanced nearer and nearer to the sphere of deeds, formed revolutionary socialistic clubs, which not only included Moscow and St. Petersburg, but a number of the other large towns of the Empire, and commenced a propaganda among the peasants and the workers in the towns.

The events in France made a still deeper impression on the Russian students, male and female, in Zurich. The union known as the "International" never had adherents of greater importance or numbers than in the years following the Franco-German war. One section of the union had its seat in Zurich, and its meetings were soon regularly attended by resident Russians, who devoted themselves with incredible zeal to the study of national economical and social works, thus, in an ever increasing degree, mingling their socialism with anarchical views. "Within a short time the whole town of Zurich," says Stepniak, "from being a seat of study was converted into one gigantic permanent club. Its fame spread all over Russia, and attracted thither hundreds upon hundreds of people, men and women."

Of course, the Government could not long remain ignorant of the fact that every year hundreds of its subjects were visiting one of the central hotbeds of the socialistic revolutionary propaganda carried on all over Europe by the International, which had compelled the various Governments to deliberate as to the ways and means of combating the threatening danger. Hence it was not long before the conclusion was come to that something must be done to protect at least the Russians from being infected by revolutionary ideas, and in St. Petersburg presently one of the most insane measures was determined on that were ever set in motion against the Nihilists. In 1873 an Imperial ukase was issued commanding all Russians residing in Zurich to return instantly to Russia, under pain of having their passports declared invalid and being themselves regarded as fugitives.

It would have been not only much less brutal, but much more prudent, to have absolutely forbidden the return of all these young men and women. Here were several hundreds of individuals, already animated with the revolutionary spirit,

suddenly compelled to return to their homes in different parts of Russia, where they would not be able to complete their studies. All of them burned with zeal for action, and with anger besides against the Government's brutal order of recall, which rendered their education for the business of life as good as impossible, the result being that nearly all without exception enlisted in the service of the socialistic revolution. With their return to Russia the second phase of the revolutionary movement under Alexander II. commences, the phase of great pacific action.

Before this, several of those who had resided in Zurich had begun on their return, and, in association with fellow-thinkers, systematically to make propaganda of socialistic doctrines. As early as the time when Karakosoff and his friends had founded a union for working for the welfare of the people and with this view had formed trade unions, trade workshops, and other institutions of a like kind, the younger generation was, more or less pronouncedly, co-operating in the efforts of socialism. It was a surprise for the Government no less than for the public in general to learn, in the course of the proceedings against Karakosoff, that he and his friends, although possessed of considerable means, had lived as workmen among workmen, in order to devote themselves to their education, sacrificing their incomes for this purpose and themselves existing in the poorest manner.

Karakosoff and his circle were by no means alone in acting like this. On the contrary, for several years past a most remarkable, widespread, and secret movement had been inaugurated by the youths of Russia, who, seeing that the authorities would do no more for the mass of the people, became in ever increasing numbers imbued with the desire to come into personal contact with different classes, to live among them, work like them, become acquainted with their ideas and interests, and to attend, by word and deed, to their

mental and material improvements. This movement cannot be better or more clearly described than by quoting the following words of Krapotkin on this subject, taken from his book "The Memoirs of a Revolutionist":

"In the years 1860–65 a bitter dispute was being fought out in nearly all well-to-do families between parents and their sons and daughters, who claimed the right to determine their life according to their own ideals and aspirations. Young men abandoned military service, office, and shop, and flocked to the universities. Young ladies belonging to the most aristocratic families travelled without a kopeck in their pockets to St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Kieff in order to learn some calling that should free them from the family yoke, and possibly here and there from the oppressive bondage of a husband. After a hard and bitter struggle many of them gained their personal independence, and desired to utilise it, not for their personal convenience, but for the purpose of spreading among the people that knowledge by which they had secured their own freedom.

"In every town of Russia, in every quarter of St. Petersburg, small societies were formed for self-education and private study. The works of the philosophers, the writings of the political economists, the researches of the Young Russian Historical School, everything was read and subjected to endless debates. The object of all this studying and discussion was the solution of the great question which had become the most important one of the day for everybody: 'In what way can we be useful to the great mass of the people?' Little by little the conclusion was formed that the only way in which their services could be really effective was to dwell among the people and share their life. The young men settled in the country as doctors, teachers, and clerks, aye, even as labourers on the land, blacksmiths, and carpenters, and endeavoured to come into close touch with the peasants.

The young women passed their class examinations, became midwives or hospital nurses, and settled in hundreds in the villages, devoting their services entirely and absolutely to the poorest class of the population.

"They entered on their mission without any thought of a social upheaval or revolutionary ideas, animated solely by the passionate desire to instruct the peasants, teach them to read, give them medical help, and lift them in some way or other out of their darkness and misery, and also to learn from them in what their ideal of a better social life consisted."

Such a movement was, of course, bound to excite the greatest distrust on the part of the Government, which had long since formed the opinion that all liberalism and all love of progress were evils, and had framed its policy accordingly. Karakosoff's attempt had shown how easily the love of the people as displayed by young Russia could be transformed into hostility to the Government. From this single case the Tsar and his immediate entourage deduced a general conclusion, and from that time forward looked upon all efforts to raise the people as being more or less revolutionary, and hostile to the existing constitution of the State.

The youthful enthusiasts were treated in accordance with this view of things. Nearly all of the younger generation were regarded as "suspects," and were consequently under the thumb of the police of the "third section." It had only to be stated that a certain person had taken part in the work, everywhere in progress, of enlightening and educating the people, and the accused would be arrested and deported "for an indefinite period." The Government, in a word, did everything to transform this movement, which at first was quite unorganised and was not even consciously socialistic, into one of an aggressive revolutionary character; and in this it succeeded.

From the very first the policy of the Government naturally drove the young men anxious for the welfare of the people into close companionship, in more or less loosely organised societies for the purpose of assisting one another in various ways. "Self-education" and "private study" were, as Stepniak says, the real and original aims of these societies, but the members soon made other themes the subjects of discussion, and among them, naturally, the question as to how they could protect their work against the attacks of the Government. From this it was no great jump to the consideration of the most suitable means of effecting a change of system, an alteration in the methods of government; and here they stood unmistakably on revolutionary ground.

Yet for years there was no advance from words to action beyond that of propagating socialistic revolutionary principles among the peasants and the workmen in the towns, partly by the distribution of writings, partly by lectures and conversation. The various societies or "circles," as the members called them, made this propaganda their chief business and worked for it with unexampled zeal and devotion.

According to the unanimous testimony of those who have furnished details of the revolutionary movement at this period, the most important, active, and widely diffused of these societies was the "Tschaikovsky Circle," so called from the name of its founder and its guiding spirit. To this circle belonged many of the subsequently best-known revolutionary personages, such as Prince Krapotkin, Sergius Kravchinsky (Stepniak), Sophia Perovskaia, Dmitri Rogatschoff, Stefanovitch, etc. None of these, however, could at first be looked upon as more revolutionistic than any other person discontented with the system of government in his country, and who, consequently, works by way of persuasion to bring about a change.

Tschaikovsky's circle worked originally and during several years on the same lines as the other young Russian societies, solely for the diffusion of such knowledge as it deemed necessary for preparing the way to reform. Its members united with fellow-thinkers in other parts of Russia and founded smaller societies, which worked in active unison with the head society, until, as Krapotkin says, there was no town of importance throughout the Russian Empire in which Tschaikovsky's circle had not its affiliated group.

The enterprise which the members of the circle had taken in hand drove them still further along the road. The manner in which the Government dealt with those who had been attracted to the work of "propagandism" compelled the whole body of enthusiastic youths to the conviction that no lasting good could be done until power was transferred to the people itself. As to how far circumstances were ripe for such a drastic change was a point on which as little attention was bestowed as on the chance of working out a new constitution of a permanent character by means of the intellectual forces available. The enthusiasts showed themselves to be animated by the noblest motives, believed in themselves, saw how the condition of the people was deteriorating every day and hour, and believed, therefore, that if only their first and nearest object, the outbreak of a revolution, could be achieved, all the rest would follow as a matter of course. The propaganda was aimed more and more directly at the organisation of the State, and was, therefore, more revolutionary. Tschaikovsky's circle, like the majority of kindred societies, became more purely socialistic than ever, and entered on all sides into direct relations with the working people of the large towns, who, they thought, could be the most easily won over to socialism.

The most gifted and energetic members of the circle were

the most zealous agents in this work. Krapotkin applied himself more particularly to the workmen of St. Petersburg, to whom he delivered lectures, until he was arrested and imprisoned in a casemate in the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul. Sergius Kravchinsky and Rogatschoff wandered up and down the country, working as saw-cutters, and under this guise spreading socialistic and revolutionary principles among the peasantry. Obuchoff, the wealthy landowner, although in the last stage of consumption, circulated kindred ideas among the people in Little Russia. Leonidas Schischko, an officer, quitted military service to become a weaver in a factory in St. Petersburg, in order the better to promote the principles of the propaganda among the workmen there. Sophia Perovskaia, descended from a high aristocratic family, and subsequently one of the most active and formidable terrorists, laboured among the working people of St. Petersburg, as did also the sisters Korniloff, the daughters of a very wealthy merchant. Many other girls, who had been compelled to quit their studies in Zurich and return to Russia, obtained places in cotton factories in Moscow in order to come into close touch with the workmen whose miserable life they shared in every respect. Whole pages could be filled with such examples. Krapotkin gives two or three thousand as the number of those who took a direct part in the propagandist movement, and reckons the number of supporters and helpers as two or three times more.

Among such a multitude of active, often youthful, and incautious adversaries it was, of course, easy enough for the underlings of the Government to find victims of their officious zeal. Arrests were constantly being made; house-to-house searches were the order of the day, or rather of the night, in the case of all those who seemed to have the remotest connection with the propagandists; and spies swarmed everywhere. The prisons were gradually filled to overflowing.

The third section worked feverishly through its tools in all parts of the Empire, and sent group after group into exile in some corner of European Russia, or to Siberia. According to the official statistics given in an administrative circular of that time, no less than thirty-seven provinces were tainted with the revolutionary spirit.

Nevertheless, in spite of all that was done to crush them, the propagandists never ceased their labours. Under this persecution their enthusiasm rose to fanaticism, their hopes to conviction that they had entered on the right road to carry their cause to victory. One after the other disappeared in 1873 and 1874. Perovskaia was arrested, acquitted by the court, but exiled by administrative order. Kravchinsky and Rogatschoff were seized, but escaped by the help of the peasants, and had thenceforward to keep themselves more in concealment. Krapotkin was imprisoned, as were also Schischko, Volkshovsky, Bokchanovsky, and countless others more or less well known. The propagandists disappeared by tens and hundreds during these years, and it was a long time before their friends could ascertain where they were, although they might assume with certainty that they had fallen into the hands of the Government. There was, however, a never-failing supply of new recruits, who took up the work where the others had left it. In the summer of 1874, after the majority of those who had set the machine in motion had been arrested, fresh reserve troops suddenly appeared upon the scene. Some hundreds of young persons, of both sexes, belonging to the people, who had been the most deeply affected by the new doctrines, rose spontaneously and of one accord to work on behalf of the cause, going about in towns and villages distributing pamphlets and leaflets, and openly preaching, without the slightest circumspection, the necessity of a rising of the masses and the outbreak of the revolution.

The consequences were, naturally, wholesale arrests. Krapotkin says that during the "mad summer" no less than 1,500 persons were arrested. The chief of the third section had become the most powerful man in Russia; his subordinates of all ranks were invested with full power in regard to house-searching and arrests. The existing prisons had long since proved inadequate, and new ones had to be built, while the road to Siberia was being more than ever trodden by an increasing number of convoys of political prisoners. No one was safe; no one could rely on being able to continue his propagandist work for more than a week or two.

At length even the leaders of the socialistic revolutionary movement had to admit that it was impossible to continue any longer in this wise. The results attained were out of all proportion to the enormous sacrifices, and other methods must, under all circumstances, be adopted. In 1875 a change of tactics was decided on. Instead of the previous system of working, as it were, sporadically here and there in the diffusion of the new doctrines, regular colonies of propagandists were established in several provinces, where the agitators settled and pursued some avocation or other, taking the utmost care to avoid rousing the suspicions of the police. Only such persons among the people who were known to be absolutely reliable were appointed to carry on the propaganda, so that these colonies managed in many instances to prosecute their work over a long period. The results were, however, insignificant; and, notwithstanding all the precautions taken, many of the colonists fell into the hands of the police.

The brutality of the police and the violence of the Government in this struggle was greater and more ruthless than ever. The treatment of political prisoners was such that now and again the latter made attempts on the lives of

their guards in order to be placed in the ranks of ordinary criminals. Others committed suicide as a means of escape from the mental and physical torture to which they were condemned by years of solitude or imprisonment in plague-ridden dens. Others again went mad, or died of various prison diseases, and all this while the "investigations" were going on. The third section, which had charge of these investigations, did not hurry itself too much. It had discovered that the most important prisoners belonged to a widely ramified secret association, and therein lay their supreme offence. Their appeals to the workmen and peasants and their action in distributing pamphlets, etc., might easily have been punished by administrative process, but there was no intention of being satisfied with this. The prisoners must be condemned for participation in a great conspiracy against the Tsar and the State, into which they had not entered, so that the whole revolutionary hydra might be crushed at one blow. Hence hundreds of persons arrested on mere suspicion, who were subsequently acquitted, and against whom not even the third section could produce sufficient reasons for exiling them, were detained in prison for years, in some cases four years and even longer.

It was not till 1877 that the first trial of the propagandists was commenced, forty of whom were arraigned before the court. The hearing was public. The Government hoped that by exposing the revolutionary schemes for which the accused were to be tried a wholesome intimidatory influence might be exercised on the masses and extinguish, once and for all, their sympathies with socialistic teachings. In this respect, however, the authorities were grossly disappointed. In the same degree that the indictments and the depositions of the "criminals" themselves enlightened the auditors as to the latter's aims, strivings, lives, and self-sacrifice, so did their sympathies go out to them, and people were seized

with respect and admiration for such colossal self-immolation. "They are saints," was the verdict of the auditors.

In the following year a still greater trial took place. The number of the accused was 193, but during the preliminary investigation of their offence fully 1,000 suspects had been arrested, imprisoned for years, examined in various ways, and so ill-treated that the number of those who in these years committed suicide, became insane, or died of disease, amounted to seventy-five, or $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the whole.

This trial also produced a deep impression on the spectators, although not the one which the underlings of the Government had expected. The public were greatly incensed at the treatment which the young, self-sacrificing enthusiasts had had to put up with during the period of examination, and still more at the incredibly rigorous punishments to which they were sentenced. Terms of ten, twelve, and fifteen years' penal servitude were inflicted on many of the accused by the special court which tried them, and this for a couple of speeches addressed to a small audience of workmen or for possessing or lending a prohibited book.

The Government, or the "third section," had during the immediately preceding years become more excited and nervous in consequence of the demonstrations which the malcontents had made in different towns, and which had led to further wholesale arrests. It was resolved to seize the opportunity to strike such a terror into the hearts of the opposition elements as to put an end to the movement hostile to the Government. Hence it was that the special court or commission had received orders to show no mercy; hence it was that the third section arrested a crowd of people against whom not even a formal accusation could be made, and visited them by "administrative process" with punishments as severe as those passed on the criminals

None the less, the intention of inspiring the opposition with terror turned out a complete failure. The disregard shown by the Government for all considerations of humanity and justice had only one effect: that of working the already deep-seated exasperation of those inclined to revolution up to the point of blind, unspeakable fury, which sooner or later must have a violent outlet.

All this might have been seen if the evolution that had taken place during the last fifteen years had been observed and weighed coolly and deliberately. Though, at its inception, the movement had been devoid of all political colour, and was based on the purest self-sacrificing love of mankind and the fatherland, its efforts to raise and improve the masses had gradually assumed a more intense, and in the end a revolutionary, character during its struggle against the constantly increasing rigour of the Government's measures.

During the previous year, when the third section had raged at its worst against its political adversaries, and its army of spies had exercised their pitiable calling with greater zeal than ever, certain events happened which might have served as a warning, but which indicated unmistakably what results were likely to spring from the adoption of a policy of terrorism. The persecuted propagandists had on more than one occasion defended themselves by force of arms. Here and there some hot-headed and insolent spies, half a dozen in all, had been killed, and it might be expected that those persecuted, if driven to despair, would not let matters rest with the removal of mere subordinate officials. But the authorities could not or would not take notice. All who, on the ground of being suspected of direct or indirect participation in the propaganda, had fallen into the hands of the authorities, were treated with inhuman severity. For utterances and actions which in any civilised country of the world

would be regarded with absolute indifference the "criminals" were punished as if they were murderers.

The revolutionists recognised the fact that all hope of success by peaceful means had vanished, and that the men in power would not hesitate to destroy them to the last man. Thence sprang the period of terror.

CHAPTER V.

THE TERROR.

THE events in the Balkan Peninsula in the years preceding the appearance of organised terrorism—first the Servian, then the Russo-Turkish war—had diverted the attention of the civilised world from the development of internal affairs in Russia. As compared with the international political trouble that had arisen in the "cockpit" of Europe, involving as it did the threatening prospect of complications between the Great Powers, the struggle between the Government and socialism excited but little interest in the rest of the world. This explains the fact that the contest, which marks so important an epoch in the development of Tsardom, has not been rightly understood in every quarter, and is consequently unfamiliar.

The movement, as we have shown more than once, was, above all things, of a socialistic character, and only indirectly political. During the very earliest period of Alexander's reign a genuine politico-liberal movement arose, but when the socialistically-minded young men appeared on the scene and by their energy captured the first place for themselves, the liberals alone hung back. They had co-operated with a will in the reforms that were first decreed, and had done everything to urge the Tsar further along the same road. They were ready and willing to proceed further with him in the work of reform, but they would not act against him. When his actions clearly showed that all hopes of other reforms, which the liberals had entertained, were idle, they

abandoned the field to others, to the party of reaction, which agreed to some extent with that of the Panslavists[1], and to the young men with socialistic tendencies. With the former the liberals could not, and with the latter would not, co-operate.

The socialists had no clear political programme. For a long time they paid no particular attention to the system of government, and, as a matter of fact, would have been quite prepared to support even an autocratic regime against Conservatives and Liberals, if such an autocratic regime had been inclined to give effect to the social reforms which they had most at heart. The struggle for civil liberty, for a constitution, and all the issues dependent on it, they looked upon as altogether inadequate. The brotherhood of the people, all working for all, in a word the most advanced principles of socialism were the objects of their desire, and their execution the goal for which they strove.

To this may be traced the indifferent success of their propaganda among the masses. Workmen and peasants alike were well alive to the fact that their existence and surroundings were wretched, and that thorough-going changes must be effected. A practical programme of reform, the meaning of which they could grasp at once, would have secured their whole-hearted support; but the vast majority of them could not go into raptures over principles and theories. If the authorities had only understood what a poor chance the propaganda, urged with so much enthusiasm but also with such limited common sense,

[1] It may be as well to explain here the difference, so often overlooked, between "Slavophiles" and "Panslavists." The former were the representatives of a national tendency, akin to that which during the first half of the last century displayed itself in most European countries, having no real political programme and no real political party. Panslavism, on the contrary, is, and has been from the beginning, political in its aims, though also tinged with nationalism, and can, at the utmost, be considered as the heir and further development of Slavophilism; not as identical with the latter.

possessed of creating a really genuine popular movement, the propagandists might have been left undisturbed to realise for themselves how little their methods were calculated to achieve any result. This would, undoubtedly, have been much more judicious from the political, not to mention the humane, point of view. The authorities, however, were not so judicious. On the contrary, after the conclusion of peace with Turkey, when they had time to give more attention to home affairs, they determined to suppress the socialist propaganda, which was considered to constitute a growing danger to the safety of the State. This decision was prompted in no small degree by the general discontent evinced at the result of the war, and the mismanagement in the civil and military departments that the war had brought to light. Once again—just as before the Crimean war, although, perhaps, not so generally—people had been hypnotised into the belief that the thorough reorganisation which the army had undergone had placed the same on the best footing; and now it was shown that even in a war against Turkey Russia was compelled to put forth all her military strength in order to reach Constantinople. To do this, however, her military and financial resources had been so exhausted that Russia, at the command of England, had to reconcile herself to the loss of nearly all the fruits of her victory. Then the credit of the Empire had, through this by no means prolonged war, sunk so low that her paper money was, for a long time, worth no more than half its nominal value. The distress was almost as great as after the Crimean war, for if on this occasion also one or two Great Powers had taken sides with Turkey Russia's defeat would have been much more pronounced. This was understood by everybody, and hence the discontent was deep and universal. To this, moreover, had to be added the fact that Bulgaria, with the consent of Alexander II., had obtained a constitu-

tion. It had always been given out as the first and most important reason for refusing a constitution to Russia that the people were not by a long way ripe for such a form of government; yet here was a constitution granted to the Bulgarians, a people who, under Turkish dominion, had certainly received to a far less extent any preliminary training for a constitutional form of government.

The result of all this was that the Government eyed the socialistic propaganda with greater apprehension than ever and determined to use all possible means to put an end to it. The police received orders to arrest without hesitation all persons who seemed to have any connection with the propagandists, and anyone who was acquitted by the courts was at the instance of the third section systematically deported to Siberia. The authorities kept on driving the social reformers, who, in a political sense, were at first not to be taken too seriously, step by step further, until, on the one hand, people who were ill-treated began to defend themselves against the myrmidons of the Government, while, on the other, the primarily social movement now became political and revolutionary, and culminated in real conspiracies against the head of the State and the system of government.

In January, 1878, the police discovered that a certain group of young men in Odessa, led by one of their comrades, Kowalsky, were engaged in socialistic agitation, and consequently orders to arrest them were issued. The arrest took place just as the group had assembled at their meeting-place, but Kowalsky and his friends, who well knew what fate awaited them if they once fell into the hands of the police, made a desperate resistance. A regular fight with revolvers and other weapons ensued, in which several of the police and some of their adversaries were more or less severely wounded, before the arrests could be accomplished.

This affair created a great and general sensation in Russia, where people, in all but official circles, were predisposed to side with the parties arrested. Before discussion about it had subsided another event occurred which threw the Odessa fight entirely into the shade. The police prefect of St. Petersburg, Trepoff, had, among other methods of inspiring the political "criminals" with terror, adopted the punishment of thrashing, and had ordered an arrested propagandist, Bogoljuboff by name, to be knouted. Trepoff's brutality raised a veritable storm of exasperation, not only against him personally, but against the whole system under which such enormities were possible. The affair was discussed in all parts of the Empire, and people were united everywhere in cursing with equal warmth the powerful favourite of the Tsar, quite independently of any general political views. In one person, a young girl, who knew neither Trepoff nor his victim, who had never had anything to do with politics or political propaganda, the exasperation was so strong that it ripened into action.

From her distant home in one of the Volga provinces Vera Sassulitsch journeyed to St. Petersburg, went, without telling anyone of her intention, to Trepoff's office, and with a revolver shot severely wounded the dreaded prefect of police. She made no attempt to escape, but allowed herself to be arrested, stating, in her answer to questions concerning the motive of her act; that she wished to compel the Russian State to note and ponder over the inhuman atrocities which, in the Government's name, were being daily and hourly enacted, and that she had, therefore, determined to shoot down one of the worst instruments of the Government.

Her deed caused enormous excitement. Alexander himself visited the wounded and, as was thought, dying prefect of police, whom the fear of death unmasked; for he ordered

a will to be drawn up with all speed, a sufficient proof that he was a tremendously rich man, although he had entered on his office with empty pockets. How he had made his millions was so patent to everyone that when Trepoff recovered he was obliged to disappear from public life.

Vera Sassulitsch was arraigned before the ordinary criminal court. The Government still persisted in classing the political with the ordinary criminals, although as regards the former they no longer respected the judgments of the ordinary courts. The trial was public, and the court was filled to overflowing. The counsel for the accused made a speech of passionate indignation, which was really a severe attack on the ruling system and its agents, like Trepoff.

The jury acquitted Sassulitsch amid a hurricane of applause, and the moment she passed the threshold of the court she was carried off by her friends, who concealed her so well that, although the third section searched St. Petersburg through and through, they were unable to execute the order to re-arrest her that had been immediately issued. Some little time afterwards she succeeded in escaping *viâ* Finland to Western Europe. All the circumstances connected with this event were, of course, of a nature to reinforce in a high degree the spirit of resistance which animated the revolutionists, a fact which was not long in making itself known. Only eight days after Sassulitsch's attempt a spy belonging to the third section, one Nikanoff, a man who had displayed particular zeal in tracking and denouncing the propagandists, was murdered at Rostoff-on-Don, and on the 7th of June of the same year Heikung, a captain of gendarmerie, met with the same fate at Kieff. This man had also distinguished himself by his outrageous behaviour to the socialists.

During the summer the trial of the above-mentioned Kowalsky came to an end at Odessa. He and his companions had, at the instance of Mesentseff, the chief of the

third section, been put on their trial before a court-martial, and the sentence of death passed on Kowalsky fulfilled the expectations of the Imperial chief of police. The sentence roused the greatest anger in socialistic circles, who had good reasons for contending that a sentence of death for armed resistance to the police, when nobody was killed, was an act of vengeance and not of justice. They, consequently, at once despatched an ultimatum to Mesentseff intimating that he would forfeit his life for Kowalsky's death if the sentence should be carried out.

On the 14th of August Kowalsky was shot in Odessa, and two days later Mesentseff was struck down with a dagger by Sergius Kravchinsky (Stepniak) in broad daylight, on the Nevski Prospect in St. Petersburg, at the other end of the Empire. Kravchinsky disappeared in the crowded thoroughfare, the finest in the capital, and baffled all the searches of the police. The Government's reply to this extraordinary boldness of the revolutionists was to send all political offences for trial by court-martial and greatly to reinforce the police and espionage sections. General Drenteln was appointed chief of the third section, and inaugurated his regime by arresting close on two thousand persons in St. Petersburg alone, without succeeding in laying hands on Kravchinsky.

The senseless proceedings of the authorities provoked the revolutionists to further acts of violence. On the 22nd of February, 1879, Prince Krapotkin, Governor of Garikoff, was murdered, having ordered the political offenders imprisoned there to be treated in the most barbarous manner. Two days later a number of propagandists, who were about to be arrested, had another regular fight with the police at Kieff, and on the 1st of March the vengeance, or rather justice, of the revolutionists overtook and destroyed the spy Reinstein, a creature of the third section, at Moscow.

On the 26th of the same month a young man, Leon Mirski by name, rode up to the carriage of the chief of the third section as he was driving along one of the principal thoroughfares of St. Petersburg, and, again in broad daylight, fired two revolver shots at Drenteln; but Mirski's horse shied and reared, so that Drenteln was only slightly wounded. Mirski got away on this occasion, but was subsequently arrested and condemned to death; he was, however, pardoned on the scaffold and sent to penal servitude for life.

Barely a month later, 14th of April, the student Solovieff met Alexander II. walking round the crescent-shaped space facing the Winter Palace and fired five revolver shots at the Tsar, but not one of them struck home, and "the Tsar hastened away with zigzag steps, stepping to the right and left," as the text of the official announcement has it. Solovieff, who had been practising assiduously, and had acquired a pretty certain aim with his own revolver, had at the last moment, in consequence of an accident happening to it, been compelled to use another with which he was not familiar, and which sent the bullets wide of the mark. Solovieff was arrested.

The day before this attempt another spy, one Baranoffski, was killed.

Both the Tsar and everyone else now recognised the seriousness of the situation, and the result of this recognition was a fresh series of outrages, which suspended the law throughout the Empire. The country was divided into six districts, and at the head of each a governor-general was appointed, with such far-reaching powers that even the special prerogative of the monarch to inflict or annul sentences of death was entrusted to him. The autocrat practically surrendered his entire unlimited authority to half a dozen subjects. Had he only transferred a part of it to his subjects in general, he would have secured quite

another result, and might have ended his life in peace and tranquillity.

The worst of all these governors-general were General Gurko in St. Petersburg and Todleben in Odessa. Both of them gave immediate proofs as to how they understood their duty and position.

On the 27th of May three political prisoners were hanged at Kieff: Valerian Osinski, Brandner, and Antonoff. All three were condemned to death by a court-martial which could charge them with no other offence than participation in the propaganda. But the third section knew, through its spies, that they were in close relation with that group which generally went by the name of "Terrorists," and that Osinski especially was looked upon by them as one of their most prominent and boldest men. This was enough. The court-martial was there to sentence them, not to trouble itself about any niceties of justice.

On the 10th of June Solovieff was hanged in St. Petersburg; on the 31st of July Biltschansky and Feodoroff met the same fate in Kieff; on the 23rd of August S. Tschubaroff, Dmitri Lisogub, and J. Davidenko were hanged in Odessa, and the next day S. Wittenberg and J. Logovenko in Nikolaieff. Thus the Government set terrorism against terrorism.

The execution of Lisogub proved more than anything that the only point of view that concerned those to whom the conduct of the campaign against the Nihilists was entrusted was the particular one which aimed at striking such terror into the adversaries of the Government as to enforce submission at any cost. Lisogub had never taken an active part in the work of the socialists, and still less in that of the terrorists, although he heartily sympathised with both. He was a very wealthy landowner, of a weak physical constitution, and eccentric in character, animated with the warmest

feeling for the poor and lowly, and with a burning desire to improve their lot. He believed that he had found in socialism a means of doing this, and had, accordingly, begun to support the propaganda at an early period. Then, under the stress of the unceasing struggle against the attacks of the Government on the movement, which for a long time was in no way unfriendly to the administration, he had entered on the same road to revolution as the other socialists, until ultimately he became, like the most advanced of the latter, heart and soul a terrorist. Nevertheless, surrounded and watched at every step as he was by a crowd of poor relations, he had found himself unable to take a personal part in the cause. All he could do was to help the workers with money, which he gave so freely, that, according to Stepniak's testimony, he, almost alone, defrayed the heavy expenditure incurred in the struggle against Imperialism during a period of eighteen months. He himself lived very frugally, in order to make his resources go as far as possible; but, in spite of that, the greater part of his fortune had been sunk when, on the information of the steward of his remaining estate, he was arrested and accused of being in communication with the Nihilists. Nothing could be brought against him except that he had given large sums of money for unknown purposes, and although no kind of evidence was produced, the information was considered proved both by the court-martial and Todleben, who confirmed the sentence of death and ordered Lisogub to be hanged.

It soon became evident how thoroughly the authorities had deceived themselves in thinking that they could overcome the terrorists by hanging everybody in the slightest degree suspected of being associated with them. The terrorists replied with the organisation of their executive committee, which passed sentence of death on Alexander II., and informed him that it would be carried out unless he

sanctioned the introduction of a constitutional form of government.

To such a point had the extremist section of the Russian socialists come. The motives and objects of revolutionary action had, in the course of the struggle, undergone a complete change, so much so that the revolutionists were now once more fighting for the whole Russian community, and not for their own party only. In his great work, "L'Empire des Tsars et des Russes," Leroy Beaulieu says in regard to this important change:—

"During the sanguinary struggle with the authorities on which the revolutionists had entered they changed not only their tactics and plan of campaign, but also their standpoint. At one time they had valued very lightly the middle class freedom of Europe and looked down upon it with haughty superiority; but now they discovered that the political freedom which they so much despised was of immense value as a bulwark against administrative arbitrariness and a means of securing the right of free propagandism.

"This conception of things was something new to Nihilism, and transformed its character radically. The struggle against administrative violence had passed from the obscure, nebulous domain of Utopia to the firm ground of practical politics. The aim of the revolutionists was now the overthrow of the autocracy. Their desperate campaign against the sovereign and his Government had now a clear and definite purpose: the abolition of absolutism. And so it happened that, while they aroused society by the terrible nature of their deeds, they kept approaching the standpoint of liberalism and the generality of people. In their manifesto they declared themselves ready to lay down their arms on the condition that the sovereign gave his assent to the convocation of a national assembly. By this remarkable *volte*

face Nihilism has been transformed into that constitutionalism which it formerly treated with so much contempt."

Yet neither the Tsar nor his advisers grasped the importance of this change. They could not understand that the liberals, who had withdrawn so ingloriously when the socialists made their appearance, had now secured a basis for new hopes, and that the aim of the terrorists had become identical with that of the moderate liberals. Neither, for the same reason, could the authorities understand on what basis terrorism could endure and develop in spite of all that the Government was doing to destroy it. They could not perceive that terrorism was supported by word and deed, not only by the moderate socialists, but by the more far-seeing liberals, who rendered passive assistance in many ways; because now, although its methods were not generally approved, its direct object was the liberation of the whole of Russian society from the autocracy. If the innermost history of this period ever comes to be written, it will undoubtedly astound most people by showing how universal was the support which the terrorists received, and which emanated partly from quarters where the very least sympathy of any kind might be expected for their cause.

This, then, was the chief reason why they were able so long and so energetically to continue the duel which they had begun. They not only saw that they could now rely on the liberal elements, but very greatly overestimated the latter's will and ability to take a share in the course of events. The terrorists did not understand that the liberals were just as little inclined as formerly to take action against the Government. They believed that all who desired a change in government would be ready to come forward frankly and openly if only the autocrat, who now stood for reaction, were removed. This removal had become their sole object so absolutely that they even neglected to take

into account the feeling in liberal circles, and altogether undervalued the importance of the influence of these circles on the Tsar and his policy; whence the terrible blunders that were made in executing his death sentence.

It was natural enough for the Tsar and his advisers to believe that their power was more than sufficient to protect the person of the autocrat. They, consequently, confined themselves to taking more comprehensive protective measures, and at the same time continued to pursue their terrifying policy, as the list of executions previously given testifies. The Tsar only appeared outside his palace surrounded by a numerous escort of Cossacks of the Guard riding in front, behind, and at the side of his rapidly driven carriage. When he undertook a journey the railway lines were guarded by soldiers, stationed at sight distance from each other. The enormous length of line was guarded in this way when, in 1879, he journeyed to and from Livadia, in the Crimea, and while he was still residing there the lines by which he was expected to return were under constant surveillance. But all this was of no avail. The fanaticism of the terrorists shrank before no danger, before no obstacles. They were determined to carry the ordained death sentence into execution if the Tsar should not consent to comply with their conditions.

In the same year they planned a mine to be laid under the "Stone Bridge" in St. Petersburg, at one of the most frequented points, which the Tsar often passed on his way to and from the palace. The project was put into action and the mine prepared by two terrorists, Scheliaboff and Tetiorka, but the latter did not appear at the appointed time. The favourable moment was lost, and did not return. In Nikolaieff, Logovenko, the assistant of Wittenberg, had organised an attempt to blow up the Imperial steam yacht, then anchored in the harbour with the Tsar on board. The

plan was, however, foiled by a quite unexpected visit of the police to the house where the electric battery was installed, and whence the wires led to the mine. The plot being discovered, both the terrorists were arrested and hanged shortly afterwards, on the 24th of August.

Far from being discouraged by these and other difficulties, the executive committee only redoubled its energy. The return journey of the Tsar was postponed to the end of November or early in December. He could only come by two lines, a fact of which the executive committee determined to take advantage. Mines were arranged to be laid at no less than three places: in the neighbourhood of Odessa, near Alexandrovsk, and just outside Moscow. Immediately after the decision was come to preparations were made at all three points, and the work vigorously carried on.

A change of the Imperial travelling route necessitated the abandonment of the work near Odessa. The preliminary works for the mine were not discovered till long afterwards. In the neighbourhood of Alexandrovsk, where Scheliaboff again, backed by another terrorist, Okladsky, looked after the work, a place for laying the mine was selected on the railway embankment, where even a moderate shock would have sufficed to precipitate the train into a deep ravine below. All was in readiness, and the electrical current connected at the critical moment; but it was either too weak, or the detonator had some flaw. At any rate there was no explosion, and the Tsar passed uninjured over the dangerous spot, only learning long afterwards of the peril he had escaped.

Accident favoured him in the same way near Moscow. The conspirators, headed by Sophia Perovskaia and Leo Hartmann, had purchased a small house, on the outskirts of the suburb inhabited mostly by members of the "Old Believer" sect, which looked on the Moscow-Kursk

railway. The conspirators worked two months here without the neighbours being aware of anything but that two people dwelt in the house. That both of them received other visitors could not be concealed, but, as they were considered to be sectarians associating secretly with their fellow-believers, care was taken not to inform any outsider, least of all the police, the enemies of all sectarians, of anything that might possibly appear strange in the life and conduct of the new neighbours.

From this house a tunnel was dug which terminated under the railway embankment where the mine was laid. The conspirators knew only too well that death would befall them each and all in case they should be discovered, and to provide against the latter event a bottle of nitro-glycerine was placed in a convenient part of the house, sufficient to blow them all to pieces should they be found out. Sophia Perovskaia had undertaken to explode the bottle by a revolver shot. Twice at least they were on the brink of being discovered, the first time when the conspirators, in order to procure means to carry on their work, wanted to raise a loan on the house. The representative of the money-lender came in company with the police, who, however, noticed nothing suspicious. The loan was advanced, and the work continued.

On the second occasion, a few days before the arrival of the Tsar, when everything was in readiness, the police, on some trivial pretext, paid them a visit, searching, according to their usual custom, for anything suspicious. This time, again, everything was in the best order, so that the conspirators were able to complete their preparations undisturbed. However, as it turned out, the entire weary and extremely dangerous work was again rendered fruitless by one of those accidents which it is so absolutely impossible to foresee.

One of the precautionary measures adopted for the Tsar's

safety consisted in his travelling alternately in three different trains, one following the other at short intervals. Up to the last station before reaching Moscow he rode in the middle train, but at this station he entered the first train. The conspirators could not be informed of this, and so they let the first train pass and only exploded their mine just as the second train was passing over it. This train was smashed to pieces, many persons were killed and wounded, but the Tsar had already reached Moscow, and for the time being was saved. The conspirators contrived to elude the investigations of the police, thanks chiefly to the many passive supporters of the terrorists, among whom all classes of society were represented, and who always showed themselves willing to conceal those who were the most eagerly sought after.

These various outrages and attempts proved to the Tsar and the public that the terrorists were not to be daunted from pursuing with the deadliest energy their purpose of removing the autocrat, and that they possessed both the means and the will for achieving their object. It is true that the Tsar had so far escaped these attempts, but this was evidently due more to accident than to any measures taken for his safety. His immediate advisers incessantly exhorted him not to display any forbearance towards the revolutionists, and Alexander continued to follow their advice. At the same time he showed himself not quite disinclined to give heed to other counsels, which represented to him that the only way to stop this revolutionary agitation was to grant the people a certain measure of liberty and self-government, with a constitution, if only on a limited scale.

However that might be, he gave no sign by any outward action that he had begun to doubt the wisdom of the policy pursued during the past few years, but allowed the "temporary" governors to continue in their application of the

intimidatory system. On the 20th December three more terrorists were hanged in Odessa, viz., W. Malinka, L. Maidanski, and J. Dobrosiagin. Wholesale arrests were being made in all parts of the Empire. The Moscow conspirators were hunted everywhere; and hundreds upon hundreds of persons, men and women, suspected of political offences, but whom it was quite impossible to convict, were despatched month after month by the third section to Siberia.

This institution, "the third section of his Majesty's Chancery," now stood at the height of its dominion, its chief's powers in Russia being in reality more unlimited in extent than that of the Tsar himself. This official's underlings and spies of all ranks and social condition swarmed throughout the Empire, and kept the inhabitants in a state of never ending unrest and excitement by their arbitrary and brutal interference with the private life of the citizens.

This third section dates its origin from the time of Peter I. It was established as a "secret department," and entrusted with the "judicial" treatment of the adversaries of the semi-European military State which Peter aspired to found. This treatment usually consisted in the infliction of the most inhuman torture, in the course of which the victims mostly gave up the ghost. Under his successors up to the time of Nicholas I. the institution, now known as the "secret chancery," lived and expanded, under continual employment of torture, sometimes applied to such an extent and with such cruelty that the narratives of the work done by the "secret chancery," as in the time of Anna under Minich's direction, filled all Russia with horror and terror. Nicholas gave this government department its final form by incorporating it with the gendarmerie, and invested it with such authority that the chief of the third section was the real ruler of Russia during the entire period of his reign.

During the early years of the reign of his successor the

third section played a much less prominent part, but the more Alexander II. fell back into reaction the higher rose the influence of the third section, until it became even greater than in the time of Nicholas I.

Already in the early seventies this influence was such that Krapotkin, writing about this organism, into whose clutches he himself had fallen, expresses himself as follows (see "Memoirs of a Revolutionist"):—

"In every province, in every town, aye, even in the railway stations, there are gendarmes who report direct to the local general or colonel, who, in their turn, are in communication with the Chief of the Gendarmerie, who again is received in daily audience by the Tsar, and reports to him everything that he considers advisable. All the officials in the Empire are thus under the surveillance of gendarmes, and it is the duty of the generals and colonels to keep a vigilant eye on every subject of the Tsar, even on provincial governors, Ministers, and Grand Dukes. The Emperor himself is the object of their strict guardianship, and, as they are thoroughly familiar with all the petty affairs of court life and know every step that the Emperor takes beyond his palace gates, it follows that the Chief of the Gendarmerie is, so to speak, the most intimate friend of the Tsar.

"At this period of Alexander's reign the third section was invested with almost absolute power. The colonels of gendarmerie carried out their investigations with total disregard of law or justice. They arrested whom they pleased, kept them imprisoned as long as they pleased, or exiled hundreds to the north-eastern parts of Russia or to Siberia, according to their own high will and pleasure. The signature of the Minister of the Interior was a pure formality, because he had no control over them and knew nothing of their proceedings."

Later on, when terrorism stepped into the arena and, with ever increasing audacity and energy, waged war against the

autocracy, the authority of the third section was extended to such a degree as far to surpass that of any other department of State, and thrust the Tsar himself into the background.

Yet notwithstanding this unexampled investiture of authority, quite incompatible with the customs of a civilised State, the third section totally failed to put an end to terrorism or even to hinder its further development. By threats, bribery, or other kindred methods, it succeeded now and again in inducing this or that member of the terrorist party to betray what he knew of the executive committee, its meetings and projects. As a rule, however, no member of the party was acquainted with more than a few other associates, and none but those of the most trustworthy innermost circle were initiated into the plans concerning executions and attempts. Neither traitors nor informers were, therefore, in a position to supply information which might lead to the destruction of the terrorist organisation; and they, moreover, risked their lives if they went into the service of the third section.

The greatest difficulty the terrorists had to contend against was that of preserving the secrecy of their printing presses, which naturally required the attention of more than one person for the supply of large quantities of pamphlets, appeals, etc.; it was also inevitable that other people besides the printers should be aware of the existence of these presses. Consequently, it repeatedly happened that one or other of the secret revolutionary presses was discovered and destroyed; but there were always more to take their place, so that, in spite of all, in the years when the struggle was at its height the terrorists could always print their manifestoes and proclamations in Russia itself. That this could be possible was to be attributed to the astonishing devotion which the terrorists of all ranks displayed for their

cause. They knew that no human power could save those whose connection with a secret printing press became known. All who engaged in such work must resign themselves to live as in a prison, unable to have intercourse even with their party associates or to leave their rooms, so as not to become objects of solicitude on the part of the countless spies who swarmed on all sides. Moreover, the certainty confronted them of being sooner or later discovered and hanged, or in the most favourable case despatched to the Kara mines in Siberia. Notwithstanding all this, there were always members of the party ready to take the place and continue the work of those who had been discovered and arrested. They worked night after night, revolver in pocket, in constant dread of a visit from the police, and prepared to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

After the railway attempt on the 2nd December, 1879, the activity of the police and their spies was redoubled, while at the same time the terrorists distributed their appeals and proclamations in greater numbers than usual among the public, asseverating that only a change of the policy adopted by the Government could put an end to their movement, that only a constitution granted to the people would induce them to annul the sentence passed upon the Tsar. The third section had for a long time past declared in the most positive terms that no secret printing press could be carried on in St. Petersburg without being discovered at once, and that the printed matter must, undoubtedly, be smuggled in from some other place. Now, however, it was clear to everybody that the terrorists really had set up at least one printing press in the capital of the Empire. The matter distributed often contained information concerning the events of the day so shortly after they had occurred that it could not possibly have been printed elsewhere than in St. Petersburg. The efforts of the police increased with every new

leaflet distributed, and were at length crowned with success. On the 30th January, 1880, the attention of the police was attracted to the printing press of the *Narodnaia Volia*, and they proceeded to search the house. The employees at work there defended themselves with desperate obstinacy, and with their revolvers succeeded for some time in keeping the police at bay. They, of course, could not escape, but were all arrested after two of their number and several of their assailants had been wounded.

Not long after a member of the terrorist party, one Scharkoff, turned traitor and denounced another printing press, in which the paper *Tschorni Perediel* was printed. Here again the terrorists fought savagely before they could be overpowered and arrested. The informer, however, did not long enjoy the reward he received from the third section, as the terrorists also soon paid him the wages due to him. The executive committee sentenced him to death, and on the 5th March he was slain.

Before that, on the 18th February, an event had occurred which at last induced Alexander II. to doubt whether it was prudent to pursue a policy which had borne such bitter fruit and had already cost life and liberty to thousands of his most intelligent subjects, without in any appreciable degree damming the currents of revolution by means of punishment and persecution. This event was the explosion at the Winter Palace.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST YEAR OF THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER II.

HISTORY can hardly give an instance of anything more desperately daring than the attempt to blow up the Russian autocrat in his own palace in the heart of his capital. It was, however, just in the incredible boldness of the idea that lay the possibility of its being successfully carried out. The palace was, of course, strictly guarded, though it was in the nature of things that this strictness should be more theoretical than practical. No man could imagine the chance of any danger happening to the Tsar in his own palace, except perhaps that of some irresponsible individual slipping in and attempting the life of the Tsar with the absolute certainty of sacrificing his own. For such a danger preparation was made, but it never occurred to anyone to contemplate other possibilities.

The terrorists took advantage of this situation. One of their members, Halturin, a man of the people and a waiter by calling, bethought himself of laying a mine in the palace, where he had obtained employment. He had very carefully studied the topography of the building, and had come to the conclusion that such an undertaking presented no insuperable difficulties, but could, indeed, be executed with relative ease, that is as compared with several terroristic attempts which had already been made. This idea appealed particularly to Scheliaboff, who had previously laid the mines under the "Stone Bridge" in the centre of St. Petersburg and in the railway embankment near Alexandrovsk.

Halturin had discovered that the quarters in which the

palace waiters were lodged lay under the Imperial dining-room, where the Tsar was in the habit of taking dinner, but not immediately under it. Over the waiters' quarters and under the dining-room there was a larger room used for the palace guard, so that the mine could not be laid close under the floor of the dining-room. Scheliaboff and Halturin thought, however, that they could get over this unfavourable circumstance by making the charge of dynamite so much the more powerful. For a long time Halturin smuggled small quantities of dynamite into the palace every day, and hid them beneath his personal belongings, where it could never occur to anyone to look for such things. He kept his effects just in the corner of the lodging nearest that part of the dining-room where the explosion would have the most terrible effect. He could not lay a mine proper, because it was not possible for him to bore through the walls or the ceiling of the room.

The explosive charge would certainly have been larger and more powerful if an accidental circumstance had not prevented the plotters from completing their preparations. In searching the dwelling of a person who was suspected of being in league with the terrorists, a plan of the Winter Palace fell into the hands of the police, on which plan the said Imperial dining-room was marked with a cross. This caused the police to think, and they not only set themselves to find out the meaning of the cross, but instituted a series of searches in the palace itself, in the course of which the waiters' quarters also became the object of their attention. The personal effects of the occupants were, however, not examined by the police, so that Halturin's store of dynamite escaped detection; but from that time forward no residents in the palace were allowed to go in and out without being more or less thoroughly searched every time. The smuggling of dynamite was, consequently, rendered much more difficult, and even then only the very smallest quantities could be handled.

At length everything was ready as far as it could be. Halturin was to meet Scheliaboff on the day appointed for the explosion at a certain spot in the big open square fronting the palace. The only difficulty was to find out at what time the Tsar would be in the dining-room, as the midday meal was often delayed half an hour. At last Halturin thought one day of hazarding the attempt and lighting the fuse at a time when the Tsar must surely be present in the dining-room. He, therefore, left the palace in order to meet Scheliaboff at the appointed place.

"Gotovo!" ("It is ready"), said Halturin as they met, and they both stood waiting in breathless suspense until they heard a dull report proceeding from the palace, and noticed shortly afterwards an unusual movement in its neighbourhood. Litters with wounded, in large numbers, were carried out, and firemen hurried up from different quarters. The explosion had evidently been very destructive, but whether the Tsar had fallen a victim to it or not the two plotters were not able to discover.

It was not till the next day that they and others learned that Alexander had again escaped danger without receiving a single scratch. He had entered the dining-room much later than usual, and was just at the door when the explosion occurred and smashed the floor. Whether the Tsar, even if he had been sitting at the table, would have been killed may for very good reasons be doubted, as the effects of the explosion were chiefly confined to the room beneath. Here they were terrible. The whole room was destroyed, the floor and furniture smashed to atoms. A considerable number of the soldiers on duty, about thirty, were killed and wounded, and many other persons injured. The Tsar had suffered no physical injury of any kind from the attempt, but so much the greater was the moral impression on him and his immediate entourage. The terrorists had shown that

he could never feel sure of his life anywhere, not even in his own chamber, in spite of all the extra precautionary measures taken to protect him, in spite of the fact that he had handed over the whole of his people to the irresponsible third section, and that he had transferred to others his autocratic authority throughout the greater portion of his empire, namely, to the governors-general, as to whose will and desire to crush out terrorism there could be no possible doubt. If all these measures could not suffice to prevent such an attempt to murder the Tsar, involved as it was and so difficult of execution, then the terrorising system, as it existed, was absolutely useless, and some other organisation was necessary to replace the temporary governors-general, who had proved themselves quite incapable of fulfilling the hopes expected of them.

In St. Petersburg a "high executive committee" was formed to take over solely and absolutely the administration of internal affairs, and Loris Melikoff, who had acted as "temporary" governor-general of Kharkoff, was placed at the head of this commission. In Kharkoff, as also during his earlier career, Loris Melikoff had given proofs of a fairly humane disposition, so that compared with his other colleagues, say Gurko and Todleben, he might be called mild and liberal. Under any other conditions of government than those obtaining in Russia, his particular way of viewing things would have been styled ultra-conservative or even reactionary; but in Russia the reforms which it was now known that he desired to carry out meant a great advance in a liberal sense. Invested with an authority which made him a kind of vice-emperor, he set himself at once to the work of attacking the evil at its roots. During a long and varied career in the service of the Government, both as the holder of high military appointments and as a civil administrator, he had seen and learned how deeply rooted were these evils

which must be got rid of if real and enduring improvements were to be effected.

He knew that rash and radical reforms would encounter such a strong resistance that the Tsar would probably be induced to refuse his assent, and he, therefore, gave himself time to think deliberately over the work to be set on foot in order to win the confidence of the Tsar in a sufficient degree to enable him to carry out the whole programme he had in view.

Generally speaking, people were somewhat in the dark as to the projects which the newly created dictator had at heart, and consequently eyed his first measures with considerable and quite unjustifiable mistrust. Least of all did the terrorists believe that anything was to be expected of Loris Melikoff, and therefore they immediately made him the object of an attempt, on March 5th, which, however, miscarried. The assailant, Mlodetzky, was seized, brought before a court-martial, and hanged two days later.

Loris Melikoff could not and would not mitigate the severity of the proceedings directed against the terrorists, because, as he and many others believed, such a course would only encourage them to greater activity. The opinion was, consequently, general that his appointment meant nothing more than a change in the methods of the reactionary system. Some of the measures adopted by him should nevertheless have shown to every thoughtful person that he was planning the introduction of far-reaching reforms which might perhaps have led to the regeneration of Russia.

One of the most important, and in this connection instructive, reforms was the recommendation of the so-called "senatorial revision." Members of the Imperial Senate whom Loris Melikoff thought he could trust were despatched to various parts of the Empire, in order that by means of comprehensive investigations made on the spot they should

acquire for themselves and the Government a first-hand knowledge of the state of affairs in the different administrative departments. That these investigations might be made in a manner both thorough and systematic, a comprehensive programme was drawn up, at the instance and with the co-operation of Loris Melikoff, regulating the method according to which the revisions were to be carried out.

This programme divided the subjects on which the Government desired information into four groups, viz., questions coming within the scope of the Ministry of the Interior, and others affecting the judicial system, the State domains, and popular education. In connection with each of these four groups were put a number of questions of such comprehensive character that the revisers could only answer them in the shape of long and detailed reports. For instance, the two questions referring to the judicial system ran as follows: "What influence has administrative banishment exercised, and what does it still exercise, generally and in regard to politically untrustworthy persons?" "Does this system require to be changed? If so, in what respect?"

Loris Melikoff knew as well as anyone how hateful this system was to the people, and how one of its consequences was to create, in a great measure, the sympathy felt for the revolutionists. He gave some indication of his intentions respecting the participation of the people by their representatives in legislative and administrative work by putting many questions relating to the sphere of action of the *zemstvo* councils. He perceived that in these institutions there lay the kernel of self-government, and this view of his was shared by all parties in Russia, on which account the bureaucrats did all they possibly could to obstruct their development, while the liberals saw in this obstruction the most unmistakable proof that the Government had become and remained reactionary.

It had been realised from the first that as long as the *zemstvos* confined their action to their own province only, without co-operating with others, they would never acquire any great importance; but that if their powers were gradually extended, and a system of co-operation established between the different *zemstvo* councils, these would develop into an institution from which a much wider popular representation would spring. This was the utmost limit of the hopes of the liberals proper, that is, of all those who saw in a successive and logical development of existing institutions the only right way to greater liberty and an improved social system. The plans of Loris Melikoff did not go much beyond this, as appears from the proposals of reform which he soon afterwards drew up, and which were partly based on the results of the senatorial revision. The reform already projected by him would, however, have given such a totally different direction to the development of the Russian State that a return to the regime previously in vogue could hardly have been thought of. Unfortunately he was not in a position to carry out these reforms. His projects and proposals were kept carefully secret. He and the few who were, perhaps, familiar with his plans were far from entertaining the firm belief that the Tsar would ultimately approve and sanction them; for he was being constantly dragged hither and thither by people seeking to impress their own views upon him. Terrorism had become a double-faced spectre, inspiring horror from whichever side it was contemplated.

The liberally-minded Loris Melikoff and others who had opportunities of making known their views were of opinion that the system of government hitherto maintained had become impossible without the co-operation and control of the citizens; that the universal and grievous abuses which were well known to the Tsar could be removed in no other

way than by a change of government in a liberal sense; and that such a change would at once put a stop to the revolutionary movement, a movement which would have never arisen if these abuses had not been so general and unbearable. Nothing but a change of system would induce the terrorists to lay down their arms; otherwise they would simply keep repeating their attempts until they succeeded. This they had themselves declared, and also shown that they would shrink before nothing.

The opponents of liberalism, with Katkoff at their head, declared, on the other hand, that any show of yielding would be attributed to fear on the part of the Government and would merely encourage the revolutionists to increase their demands. Above all, any attempt to give the people an opportunity of expressing its opinions on the Government and its policy would undoubtedly give the signal for a general agitation of such a dangerous character as to lead to a real revolution. At the present time the revolutionary party consisted only of a handful of half-insane young people, men and women, whose heads had been turned by the mad actions of socialists and anarchists. Their harangues about a constitution and such things were idle talk and a way they had; and their demands could not be listened to by any serious man. The autocratic system of government was the only one possible, the only one capable of promoting the true happiness of the Russian people, and its adversaries must be rooted out with fire and sword, which, thank God, the Government would do.

As regards the particulars of this struggle and the inclination of the Tsar to give heed to Loris Melikoff, the extreme revolutionary section was just as ignorant as to what was really intended as the latter. He had arranged for the third section to be placed under the supervision of the Minister of the Interior, and had himself been appointed

to this post, so that now all the threads of complicated machinery were united in his hands. This was regarded as another proof of the intention of the Government to pursue the same policy as before, but with still greater energy. What the reactionaries had to say about the situation and the methods to be adopted was made known to all through their newspapers; but as to the silent work of the liberals nothing was known, and just as little about Loris Melikoff's plans. The terrorists could no longer come into communication with persons in different grades of society in the same way as before. They had to keep concealed, and only in the most urgent cases could they hold intercourse with people in the outer world, and that only through mutual friends. The danger of having anything to do with such people had become too serious; their own numbers had diminished little by little, and those who remained were by degrees completely absorbed by the feverish activity to which they had devoted themselves, so that they were not able to follow with sufficient attention and deliberation the change taking place in the political currents. In no other way can it be explained why at this period they did not adopt an attitude of inactivity and await the development of events. They had so absolutely abandoned all hope of a change in the policy of the authorities that they no longer believed in such a possibility, and therefore laboured incessantly at preparations for further attempts to execute the death sentence passed on the Tsar.

In St. Petersburg, where the spies of the gendarmerie and the ordinary police officials swarmed everywhere, the difficulties in connection with schemes of this kind were, naturally, extraordinarily great, and were still further increased by the paucity of the funds at the command of the terrorists. They displayed a boldness in the face of the police which, at first sight, might almost be called foolhardiness, but was in

reality the highest degree of sagacity. To undertake things and adopt methods which one's opponent cannot imagine, simply because they appear too open and bold to succeed, is not only more astute, but more far-seeing, than to limit one's action to ways and means which are comprehensible and possible to the ordinary mind. It is precisely as if one kept within a limited compass in which the imagination of the enemy can follow all plans and ideas and make his counter-moves more easily, while a higher degree of temerity than boldness, as most people understand it, goes beyond the generally accepted limitations and makes it impossible for the enemy to guess the other's intentions.

The terrorists proceeded on the lines of this argument during the last half of the year 1880 and the beginning of the following year. Chance, which had wrecked so many of their previous attempts, had taught them not to place their faith only on one simple plan and one undertaking, but to have several in readiness in order to follow up the attempts blow after blow; thus they would have a greater prospect of success, and also of keeping up the feeling of terror that they had succeeded in arousing in the rest of society, and from whose effects they anticipated so much. Hence they made simultaneous preparations for two attempts, one of which was to be executed by means of a mine laid under a street through which the Emperor often drove, and the other by means of small bombs, charged with particularly powerful explosive materials, to be thrown at the Emperor's carriage.

The mine was laid under the Malaia Sadowaia (Little Garden Street), running from one of the most frequented parts of the Nevski Prospect. In this street and quite near the Prospect, some of the terrorists hired a basement shop, where they laid in a stock of dairy produce, butter, cheese, etc., and did an excellent business in these goods, whilst others worked unceasingly at the tunnel which started from one of

the rooms of the shop. Empty butter casks and cheese-boxes were used for stowing the excavated earth and for carrying a portion of it away. Those who did the business in the shop played their part so well that not even the police, several of whom visited the place once for the purpose of inspection, entertained not the slightest doubt but that the disguised terrorists were genuine dealers in butter and cheese; and the others laboured so energetically and skilfully, notwithstanding the lack of suitable tools and instruments, in executing their extremely perilous task that in a very short time they had completed the tunnel, and charged the mine with such a quantity of dynamite as would have been sufficient to blow up the houses on both sides of the street.

As regards the attempt by bomb, they found themselves again compelled to fit up a genuine laboratory, where one of them, Kibaltschitsch, a first-class chemist, worked at the manufacture of such a violently explosive substance that bombs filled with it need only be just big enough to be carried concealed in the hand. That he succeeded in solving this problem was shown on March 31st, 1881, though what kind of material it was which the terrorists employed with such murderous effect on that occasion does not appear to have been discovered.

Meanwhile, as these preparations of the terrorists were going on, Loris Melikoff's plans had ripened and assumed a definite shape. He had drawn up a programme of comprehensive reforms, and had gradually succeeded in persuading Alexander II. of the necessity of executing these reforms to the fullest extent. The chief point, on which Loris Melikoff himself laid the greatest stress, was the convocation of some kind of advisory assembly, which should express its opinions on legislative and administrative questions, but not give decisions. The existing high Government institutions, viz., the Imperial Senate and Ministerial Council, were to continue

their functions, and the autocrat alone had the right of decision; but instead of what may be called the free-handed Ministers, who just pursued the policy they thought best, Loris Melikoff demanded a jointly responsible Ministry whose collective members should accept and adhere to the policy which the Emperor, after taking the views of the different councillors, should be pleased to sanction. The composition and duties of the advisory assembly were set forth in the following clauses of the reform programme:—

Temporary preparatory committees to be convoked in St. Petersburg and submit bills drawn up within the limits fixed by the "highest will."

The membership of these preparatory committees to consist partly of representatives of the various Government departments, partly, by gracious permission, of expert officials or private individuals, well known for their special scientific work or their experience in different branches of State administration or in connection with the life of the people.

As a basis for the work of the preparatory committees, all the material accumulated in the Ministries and other central departments bearing on the questions which the Ministry of the Interior had drawn up for consideration to be utilised, supplemented by data supplied by the senatorial revisions, which must by that time be closed.

The bills proposed by the preparatory committees must before being sent to the Imperial Senate for examination be submitted for consideration to a general committee (the advisory assembly proper). This committee to be composed in the following manner:—

(*a*) Of persons who had taken part in the labours of the preparatory committees, and appointed by the monarch to be constantly present on the commission;

(*b*) Of persons appointed by election, partly in the

governments where the *zemstvo* institutions were established and partly in some of the large towns; further

(*c*) Of persons who in special order were convened by the Government from those parts of the Empire where the *zemstvo* institutions are not yet established.

The *zemstvo* assemblies in the governments, the great *zemstvos* (see *ante* under the heading "The Period of Reform"), were to elect one or two representatives, according to the size of the government, as members of the "general committee," while the *duma* (municipal assemblies) in the towns were entitled to send for the capitals of St. Petersburg and Moscow two representatives each and for the other towns one representative, invested with a seat and vote on the commission.

Those members of the commission who were not appointed by the Government to take a permanent part in the labours of the committee were, however, to be present and to possess the right of voting when bills were being dealt with which they had assisted in promoting.

A certain period to be fixed for the labours of the general commission, which must only find expression in remarks of an advisory character, and the results of which, as bills passed, were to be forwarded in their due order to the Imperial Senate, along with the *visé* of the Minister concerned. Any alteration in the manner and arrangement of drawing up legislative questions not to be determined by the machinery of the commission.

The president of this commission to be a person appointed direct by the Tsar.

Such, judged by the West European standard, is the more than moderate project of legislative reform which has been called Loris Melikoff's proposal for a constitution. It went no further than this. And yet, when the proposal was

submitted to him, Alexander II. cried out: "Why, this is the Etats Généraux!" ("This is the States General!"). He had a presentiment that in the course of time a much more virile and influential institution must of necessity spring from such a "general commission" as the modest advisory assembly—whose members consisted mostly of Government nominees—which Loris Melikoff had proposed. From the papers he left behind him it is evident that he, at any rate, had entertained the idea that the "general commission" might and must gradually develop into a real parliament, in which the Government would find its most powerful support in all its efforts for the welfare of the Empire and the people.

The proposal led to many long discussions, in which the Tsar oscillated from one side to the other, until at last he was induced to recognise the proposal of Loris Melikoff, which was definitely submitted to him on the 2nd March, 1881. On this occasion the Tsar instructed him to draw up the draft of an Imperial *communiqué* to be published in the official gazette, *The Government Messenger*, in order to acquaint the Russian people with the important decision taken by the Emperor, a decision destined to go the way of the policy of progress which, at the beginning of his reign, had produced such happy results.

The draft of the *communiqué* was handed in a few days later by Loris Melikoff, but the Tsar kept it for examination until the 13th March, on which day he returned it as accepted to its author, with the statement that it should, by his will, be published without any alteration. It should, however, be communicated first to the other Ministers, and at the next meeting of the Ministry, three days later, March 16th, it was read to them.

This occurred at 12.30 p.m. Loris Melikoff had achieved his object. The Tsar had decided to consult in future the views of the people respecting the government of the

Empire. He, had taken the first step on the road which, once entered on, must lead to a fundamental change of the Russian system of government. The Tsar himself was so satisfied at having at last come to a decision that immediately afterwards, on the way to a kind of review in the great riding school, he called upon one of the Archduchesses, Helena Paulovna, who had always tried to influence him in a liberal direction, in order to tell her that the die was cast.

He had hesitated too long. The terrorists, in absolute ignorance of the great decision, had also completed their preparations. When the Tsar, surrounded by the usual crowd of Cossack guards, returned in his carriage about an hour later to the Winter Palace and swung round the corner of a street on the Catherine Canal, a slimly built young woman crossed over and waved a hardly perceptible signal with the handkerchief she held in her hand. This was Sophia Perovskaia. A few seconds later a man on the footpath, close to which the Imperial equipage was passing, threw something resembling a snowball at the carriage. This was a bomb wrapped in cotton, which struck the ground and burst with such force that not only was the bottom of the carriage smashed, but a number of Cossacks, then estimated at fourteen, were flung dead and wounded from their saddles.

The Tsar, who was uninjured, left his carriage and hurried to the wounded. Many of his entourage begged him earnestly to drive on, and the coachman assured him that the carriage was not so badly damaged but that he could bring the Tsar to the palace. Alexander, however, would not listen, thinking no doubt that all danger was over for the present. At this moment a young man, who in the confusion of things had not been noticed, came quite close to the Tsar and threw a second bomb of the same kind as the first into the street. It exploded at once, literally dismembering the

Tsar and destroying the bomb-thrower, a student named Grinewitsky.

Terrorism had at last attained its end. The Tsar was not yet dead; he was, indeed, living on his arrival at the Winter Palace, whither he had been driven in a sledge belonging to a gentleman of his suite: but he died immediately afterwards, and with him were destroyed for years all hopes of a change from the reactionary autocracy.

It is hardly possible that the Tsar would have again changed his mind, and no one can say with any certainty that Loris Melikoff's advisory assembly would have developed into popular representation. But if we remember how the early years of Alexander's reign, the reform years, set in motion all the intellectual forces of Russia, which later on could not be curbed by any methods, it is impossible to feel otherwise than convinced that a return to reaction would not have been feasible if a further far-reaching reform were decided upon equal to the one contained in the accepted proposal of Loris Melikoff. The Government or the autocrat would simply have to choose between an advance in the same direction and the creation of such an universal state of discontent that a revolution could hardly be avoided.

Even now those who had staked everything to put the sovereign out of the way believed that by doing so they had rendered a revolution inevitable, unless the new Tsar were willing to sanction what, in their opinion, was not to be expected from their murdered victim. Therefore the terrorists, who had executed the deed, continued to remain in St. Petersburg. They not only remained there, but carried on a most zealous agitation among the workmen and other popular classes in order to promote a revolt, while they, at the same time, planned, drew up, and issued appeals and proclamations, notwithstanding the awe-inspiring eagerness which the police displayed in their efforts to trace the authors of the

crime. During the first week after the murder all St. Petersburg resembled a military camp. All the railway stations, bridges, etc., were guarded by police, gendarmes, and Cossacks. At every street corner in the most frequented parts of the city one Cossack on horseback and two policemen on foot were posted, ready to arrest on the spot anyone who they thought looked suspicious. It was only necessary for one of the numerous spies and police agents of various kinds, who literally swarmed all over the city, to point out to the patrol any person as a Nihilist, to ensure the latter's immediate arrest without his name or anything else being asked of him. In the two days following the 13th of March not less than eight hundred persons were arrested in St. Petersburg alone, not counting those who were seized in the provinces, and subsequently in the capital; yet among all these eight hundred there was not a single one of those who had taken part in the deed.

It was not until the 16th that the first of them, Mihailoff, fell into the hands of the police, after defending himself to the utmost, emptying all his cartridges and laying several of his assailants on the ground. During the following days the rest of the plotters were traced and arrested, one after the other, Sophia Perovskaia being the first on the 23rd. None of them had attempted to fly or seek concealment in any of the safe hiding places of which the terrorists had so many at their disposal. They were idealists, dreamers, driven by force of circumstances gradually and irresistibly towards fanaticism and deeds of fanatical boldness, to the usual inevitable disregard of anything but the one important and necessary object that they had in view.

Their trial was a long business. Every possible effort was made to crush once and for all the whole Nihilistic organisation. Even the rack was resorted to, as had often been done in similar cases, but *after*, not *before*, the trial. At last

sentence of death was passed on all the participators, namely, A. J. Scheliaboff, Sophia Perovskaia, U. Kibaltschitch, T. Milhailoff, N. Rysakoff, and Jessie Helfman.

On the 16th April the sentence was executed on all of them, except Jessie Helfman, whose execution was postponed because of her pregnancy. Only when her child was born, after being tortured for months with the thought that death by hanging awaited her as soon as she gave her offspring to the world, her punishment was commuted into lifelong exile to Siberia.

With regard to the execution of the others, the following remarks were made, not by a Nihilist or even an admirer of Nihilism, but by the correspondent of the *Cologne Gazette* (April 16th, 1881), who says: "I have been present at a dozen executions in the East, but never have I witnessed such hideous butchery."

The strongest proof that the condemned had been put to the torture lies in the fact that after the death sentence had been passed they were not allowed to see any persons from outside, not even their nearest relations, although this is the usual custom in the case of those condemned to death.

The mother of Sophia Perovskaia saw her for the last time on the day when the sentence was made known. During the next five days she was continually put off under some pretext or other, but at last received an order to go to the prison on the 15th April, where she would see her daughter again. When she arrived the prison door was opened, and she really did see her daughter—on the cart which conveyed her to the place of execution.

THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER III.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REVOLUTIONISTS AT THE ACCESSION OF ALEXANDER III.

THE first impulse of the new Tsar was to execute and fulfil in every respect his father's plans which were known to him. He himself, as far as he had any views of his own, was not inclined to liberalism, but he knew that his father had desired to introduce a change in the system of government which had produced such unsatisfactory results, and he, therefore, declared himself prepared to carry through the already accepted reforms. On the 18th March Loris Melikoff had an opportunity of submitting to Alexander III. the programme of reform which he had drafted, and after the Tsar had read it through and thought over it he wrote with his own hand on the margin of the document the remark, "Particularly well done."

However, before Alexander III. made known his decision as to the execution of the reforms proposed and approved he wanted to hear the views of his Ministers on the subject, and with that object ordered the proposal to be laid before the Ministerial Council which met on the 20th March. When the votes were taken there were; for Loris Melikoff's proposal, the Grand Duke Vladimir, Count Valeieff, Nabokoff, Solsky, Miliutin, Saboroff, and Abasa; against, Count Stroganoff, Pobiedonostseff, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Makoff, Prince Lieven, and Possiet. The others who were present abstained from voting.

As regards the minority who voted against the proposal, it should be added that Makoff got into such trouble later on

on account of bribery on a huge scale, that he committed suicide, while Prince Lieven was proved to have perpetrated frauds to an enormous extent in connection with the State domains, and was compelled to retire into private life. All the same they were Ministers, and their votes were as valid as the others, and Alexander III., though willing to go still more closely into the reform programme, took no decision. This caused further delay, during which the Tsar was exposed to the machinations of the reactionaries whom he was not sturdy enough to resist.

Alexander was himself far too predisposed towards absolutism not to yield to the reactionary influence of Pobiedonostseff rather than to the opposite influence of Loris Melikoff. This attitude was probably accentuated to no small extent by the fact that the representations of the friends of reform were much too strongly supported, although in a dignified and courteous manner, by the revolutionists, those very terrorists who had condemned and executed his father. On the 23rd March they caused a letter to reach him, which was afterwards published in a garbled newspaper version, and is for that reason, and also as showing what the aims of the revolutionists now were, well worthy of being fully reproduced here:—

"*The Executive Committee to the Emperor Alexander III.*

"YOUR MAJESTY,—

"The executive committee quite understands the mental depression from which you are suffering, but does not think that a feeling of sympathy should release it from the duty of making the following declaration. There is something still higher than even the most justifiable feelings of humanity. It is the duty to our country, a duty which commands every fellow-citizen to sacrifice himself, his own feelings, and even those of others. Impelled by this imperious duty, we turn

unhesitatingly to you, because the development of events which threaten us in the future with terrible struggles and torrents of blood will brook no delay.

"The bloody tragedy enacted on the Catherine Canal was not the work of chance, and should have astonished no one. Considering what has happened during the past ten years, it appeared inevitable, and therein lies its deep significance, which should be thoroughly grasped by those whom fate has placed at the head of the State.

"Only those who are quite incapable of understanding the life of the people, of seeing through it, can stigmatise such events as a crime committed by individuals or a 'band' of individuals. During a whole decade we have seen the revolutionary movement, in spite of the most zealous persecution, in spite of the fact that the Government of the late Tsar had sacrificed everything, the freedom, the interests of all classes of the people, their work, aye and their own dignity—in a word, in the face of all the measures adopted to destroy it, we have seen this revolutionary movement increase and expand; the best forces of the country, the most energetic and most self-sacrificing men in Russia, have come forward to enrol themselves in its ranks, and during three whole years a desperate struggle has been going on between the revolution and the Government.

"Your Majesty must admit that the Government of the late Tsar cannot be accused of want of energy. The innocent and guilty were hanged without distinction, the prisons of the remotest provinces were filled to overflowing, and the so-called leaders were executed by the dozen.

"They died peacefully and with the calm of martyrs; but this did not put a stop to the movement. On the contrary, it increased and acquired more and more strength. A revolutionary movement, your Majesty, does not depend on individuals. It is a process of the social

organism, and with regard to it the gallows, erected for the most energetic representatives of this process, are just as impotent to save the existing order of state as was the crucifixion of the Nazarene to preserve the crumbling ancient world from the triumph of reforming Christianity.

"The Government may go on with its hanging and arresting as long as it chooses; it may, perhaps, succeed in crushing a few revolutionary associations; it might, by some possibility, succeed in destroying the very organisation of the revolution; but it will never be able to prevent the further development of events. The revolutionists are born of this development of the people, of the development of Russia in the direction of new social forms.

"A whole nation cannot be crushed; still less can the discontent of a nation be removed by measures of severity. Such measures will, on the contrary, not only augment the volume of discontent, but also its energy and strength. These will be better organised exactly in the same proportion as advantage is taken to utilise the experiences previously acquired. This being the case, the revolutionary organisations cannot but increase in numbers and gain in strength with the lapse of time. This was exactly what happened in our case. What advantage did the Government secure by suppressing the 'Dolgutschintski' and 'Tschaikovski' circles and the propagandists of 1874? Their places were taken by other more active leaders.

"The severity of the Government after 1878 and 1879 gave birth to terrorism. In vain did the Government execute Kowalsky, Dubrovin, Osinsky, and Lisogub, and abolish dozens of revolutionary associations. In the place of these incomplete organisations other and more stable associations came together by a process of natural selection. Finally the executive committee came into being,

against which the Government still wages its hopeless fight.

"If we contemplate with an impartial mind the last melancholy decade, we can easily and infallibly gauge the future of the revolutionary movement if the Government does not alter its policy. It will advance and expand; the deeds of the terrorists will make a deeper impression, and the revolutionary organisations will assume a more perfect and potent form. At the same time, new causes will create still further discontent; the trust of the people in its Government will dwindle more and more; and the idea of revolution, the conviction of its possibility and inevitableness, will gain ground in a corresponding degree.

"A frightful outbreak, a bloody revolution, a spasmodic convulsion embracing all Russia, will complete the destruction of the old order of the State.

"Your Majesty, this is a sorrowful and terrible prospect, aye, sorrowful and terrible indeed. Think not, your Majesty, that these are empty words. We know better than anyone what a disaster the loss of so much talent, so much energy, will be in the time of destruction and bloody conflict, when, under other circumstances, the same forces could be applied to productive labour, to educating the people, and to the welfare of all.

"But why should such a sanguinary struggle be necessary?

"For the reason, your Majesty, that we have no Government in the right meaning of the word. A Government, to be true to the principle of its being, should exist merely to give expression to the people's efforts and execute the people's will. With us, on the contrary—pardon our saying it—the Government is nothing but a cabal, a clique, much more deserving to be called 'a gang of usurpers' than the executive committee.

"Whatever the intentions of the Emperor may be, the actions of the Government have nothing in common with the hopes and the welfare of the people.

"The Imperial Government has long since robbed the people of its personal freedom and placed it in a state of slavery to the nobility. Now it is creating a pernicious class of speculators and usurpers. All reforms result in making the condition of the people worse than before. The Government of Russia has gone so far, has plunged the masses into such poverty and misery, that they have not even the liberty to look after their common well-being, that they are not even safe from the lowest prying, not even in their own homes.

"It is only the bloodsucking officials, whose rascally extortions go unpunished, who enjoy the protection of the Government and the laws.

"On the other hand, what a terrible fate befalls the honest man who works for the welfare of all! Your Majesty knows well that it is not only socialists who are persecuted and exiled.

"What kind of Government can that be which upholds such a state of things? Is it not in reality a gang of usurpers?

"This is the reason why the Government in Russia has no moral influence over the people, why Russia produces so many revolutionists, why even such an event as the assassination of the Tsar excites sympathy among a large portion of the people. Your Majesty, do not listen to sycophants. Regicide is very popular in Russia.

"There are only two ways out of such a situation. The one is a revolution which cannot be avoided or hindered by sentences of death; the other is the transfer of power to the people and its participation in the Government.

"In the interest of the country and to avoid the destruction

of talent and energy and the terrible calamities which always follow in the track of a revolution, the executive committee appeals to your Majesty and advises that the latter remedy be adopted. Be assured that as soon as the highest power in the land ceases to be despotic, as soon as it gives proofs of its firm determination to execute that which is demanded by the will and conscience of the people, then you may dismiss your spies, who are the disgrace of the Government, send your Life Guards back to their quarters, and burn the gallows which demoralise the people.

"When these things are done, the executive committee will, on its own initiative, cease its action; its organised forces will be disbanded and employed in productive work on behalf of the civilisation, education, and welfare of the people.

"A peaceful contest between ideas will take the place of acts of violence, which are far more repugnant to us than to your servants, and which nothing but absolute necessity compels us to adopt.

"We appeal to your Majesty to lay aside all prejudices and distrust caused in the past. We will forget that you represent the power which has misled the people and inflicted so much wrong on it. We appeal to your Majesty as a fellow-citizen and an honourable man.

"We hope that personal bitterness will not destroy in you the feeling of duty or the wish to hear the truth.

"We also have reason to be bitter. Your Majesty has lost your father; we also have lost not only our fathers, but our brothers, wives, sons, and best friends. We are, however, none the less willing to forget all personal feelings of vengeance when the welfare of Russia requires it; we expect the same from you.

"We do not put to you terms of any kind. Do not, therefore, take offence at our proposals. The conditions which must

be fulfilled to enable the revolutionary movement to give place to a peaceful development of affairs are not made by us, but are the outcome of events. We simply indicate them. These conditions should, in our opinion, be embodied under two principal heads:—

"First, a general amnesty for all political offenders, because they have committed no crime, but have simply done their duty as citizens;

"Secondly, the convocation of representatives of the whole people for the discussion and regulation of matters relating to social and political life in accordance with the wishes and necessities of the people.

"We consider it necessary, however, to point out that the Government can only be said to be legalised by popular representation if the elections are absolutely free. The latter must, therefore, take place under the following conditions:—

"1. The representatives must be chosen from all classes without distinction, according to the statistics of population.

"2. No restrictions of any kind must be put upon the voters and representatives.

"3. The elections and electoral proceedings must be absolutely free. The Government must therefore sanction the following by way of temporary provisions until convocation of the National Assembly:

"(*a*) Full liberty of the press;

"(*b*) Full liberty of speech;

"(*c*) Full liberty of meeting;

"(*d*) Full liberty to address electoral meetings.

"These are the only means by whose help Russia can enter on the path of peaceful and regular development. To our country and before the whole world we solemnly declare that our party will subordinate itself absolutely to a National Assembly called together under the said conditions. It will

not display any opposition to the Government acknowledged by the National Assembly.

"It is now for your Majesty to decide. The choice rests with you. We, on our part, can only express the hope that your intelligence and conscience will inspire you with the only decision compatible with the welfare of Russia, your own dignity, and duty to your country.

"THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

"10*th* (23*rd*) *March*, 1881."

It is an easy matter to criticise this document in regard to its form and contents. In another shape it might perhaps have made a deep impression on the Tsar; but in no case could he have complied at one stroke with the demands of the executive committee. He would have had to break far too hastily with all the traditions of the Tsardom, and to divest himself and his successors of all the power to which Alexander naturally considered himself born and called. Such a step would have meant not only an unshakable conviction of the perniciousness of the autocracy for Russia, but also an unlimited faith in the ability of constitutionalism to remove all abuses, as well as a sublime personal self-abnegation on the part of the new Tsar which could hardly be expected of any man, least of all of one so mediocre in point of talents and character as Alexander III.

The proclamation of the executive committee was, therefore, not only politically impracticable and imprudent, but it was issued at a most inopportune moment. After the Ministerial Council of the 20th March, already referred to, the Tsar had shown himself disposed to accept the view of the majority. In fact, in the afternoon of the same day he is reported, on good authority, to have said to the Grand Duke Vladimir that he felt as if a heavy load would be lifted from his shoulders if he carried out the intentions of his

deceased father in regard to the reform proposals of Loris Melikoff.[1] On the 23rd he received the "ultimatum" of the executive committee, by which he was required to surrender all his power to the people. Nothing else could be expected but that he should again entertain doubts as to the wisdom of making the slightest concession to the opposition. It is anyhow certain that after this proclamation appeared the opponents of such concessions had become armed with a new and powerful weapon, which they did not hesitate to use, in order to persuade the Tsar that revolution lurked under the cloak of all liberalism, which would be content with nothing less than a complete upheaval, and which, consequently, was only encouraged and strengthened by the grant of concessions.

It is impossible to ascertain how far this interference of the executive committee contributed to the postponement by the Tsar of the definite ratification of Loris Melikoff's proposals; but that it did do so can be well understood. Alexander sought for more advice in different quarters, from the Emperor William I., for instance, who did not think it advisable to acknowledge the reforms in a constitutional sense without imposing restrictions; and meanwhile he was so worked upon by liberals and conservatives that his own judgment became gradually confused, and rested solely on the opinions of those who had spoken to him last.

A confusion equal to that of the Tsar reigned within the Government. The proclamation of the executive committee, which had been distributed among the populace, was printed by the press of the *Narodnaia Volia*, the organ of the terrorists in St. Petersburg, as was distinctly stated on the paper. It thus appeared that, in spite of the greatest

[1] This remark was communicated to Loris Melikoff by the Grand Duke Vladimir himself, and the Minister repeated it to one of his friends whom he had instructed to publish some of the papers he left behind him.

activity on the part of the police, the terrorists were still able to carry on their agitation. The dread of fresh attempts spread itself on all hands, while at the same time the want of confidence in the ability of the police to prevent them increased to such a point that it was determined to form a special secret safety corps for the purpose of protecting the life of the Tsar. The "Holy League" (Sviaschennaia Druschina), with the Grand Duke Vladimir at its head, was organised on the same lines as the executive committee—as far as this organisation was known!—and in a short time had a crowd of adherents. It became quite the fashion to belong to the League, which, in its methods and secret dealings in all things, endeavoured to imitate the terrorists, but, in contrast to the latter, was absolutely outside and above the authority of the police. The League at its secret meetings even passed sentences of death on several prominent Nihilists,[1] and chose who should carry out the sentence in the same way as the executive committee, but there was no one to bell the cat. The instruments selected always found some excuse or other to get out of the business. The sentences of death were not carried out.

On the other hand, the Government and the Emperor soon began to be influenced by certain apprehensions as to the development which the movement might take under the direction of such an ambitious man as the Grand Duke Vladimir. As a sort of counterpoise to the League another secret society, "The Voluntary Defence," was formed with a purpose which, as a matter of fact, was none other than to defend the Tsar against his protectors. It was announced officially that this society had no other object than to ensure the safe coronation of Alexander III., and in order to effect this it was not ashamed to enter into negotiations with the

[1] That this happened is proved by letters and memoranda in the possession of the revolutionists

revolutionists outside Russia and the terrorists in the Government prisons by offering them all kinds of advantages if they would undertake not to disturb the Emperor's coronation in Moscow. Ultimately, as these negotiations led to no satisfactory result, the society in question turned to the leaders of the religious sect known as the Raskolniki, and by dint of promises, which were never kept, induced them to despatch a few thousand thoroughly trustworthy members of their sect to Moscow, who served as a kind of escort to the Tsar, and surrounded him under the guise of representatives of the "people."

The two protective unions intrigued against one another, the Government police against both, and the latter in their turn against the police, while simultaneously the revolutionists and liberals were agitating for their aims with the greatest possible ardour. The then Chief of the Government Police—Von Plehve, subsequently Minister of the Interior—was not long in putting a stop to the proceedings of the Holy League. In every case of arrest made by the latter's members or its paid subordinates Von Plehve at once instituted a searching inquiry, so that the persons arrested by the police had often to wait for years. In almost every instance it turned out that the League had stepped in at the wrong moment, so that it became a laughing-stock and fell into discredit. The topsy-turvydom of the Government was incredible; its entire activity seemed to be absorbed in the endeavour to destroy the Nihilists, whose printing presses were again running, even in the capital, throwing off appeals, papers, and other matter wholesale. The Tsar was virtually a prisoner in his own palace, a constant prey to the fear of death and a distrust which totally upset his mental balance and nervous system.

Things went so far in the hopelessness of finding a way out of this deplorable situation that several schemes for the

deposition of the Tsar were projected, partly by persons and circles so closely attached to the person of Alexander III. that it would hardly have been imagined that they could entertain such designs. These schemes, as a rule, never got any further than an exchange of opinions in the most private circles, but one of the malcontents, the celebrated General Skobeleff, went beyond this.[1] At an earlier period, by refusing to accept one of the temporary governor-generalships, he had openly displayed his dissatisfaction with the policy of the Government, and when in Smolensk made approaches to the revolutionary party; finally, moreover, he had refused to join the "Voluntary Defence," although exhorted to do so by the ruling spirit, Prince Voronzoff Daschkoff. This time, however, he had conceived the simple plan of proceeding at the head of one of the regiments, on which he could rely under any circumstances, to surround the palace, arrest the Tsar, instal a provisional Government, and proclaim a constitutional administration for Russia. Unfortunately he doubted his own ability to execute this scheme alone, and addressed himself to Count Ignatieff, enquiring whether the latter would co-operate and enter the provisional Government. Ignatieff, with his usual reckless and none too reliable zeal, accepted Skobeleff's proposal, and they both went to Loris Melikoff to secure him as the third member of the alliance. Loris Melikoff, however, who altogether mistrusted Ignatieff, refused—probably for other reasons as well—to have anything to do with the matter. He at any rate kept silent, and Count Ignatieff seized the opportunity of betraying not only Skobeleff, but also Loris Melikoff, to the Tsar, who soon after appointed the informer to the Ministry of the Interior.

[1] This episode, which can only be taken as evidence of the temper then prevalent, is related by Stepniak in his book "King Stork and King Log," Part I., pp. 51, 52. He had this information from one of the closest friends of Melikoff, to whom the latter communicated it during his illness at Nice.

The person who first heard the account of this intrigue from Loris Melikoff has declined to let his name be made public, so that the correctness of the story cannot be guaranteed. There are, nevertheless, no valid grounds for doubting its truth: on the contrary, its credibility seems to be attested by the fact that Loris Melikoff quitted Russia shortly afterwards, and lived subsequently almost as a fugitive; also by the fact of the disfavour into which Skobeleff fell.

Be this as it may, while these and other intrigues were going on, Alexander had, without informing Loris Melikoff of it, been consulting with increasing frequency the unseen protagonist of the reactionary party, Pobiedonostseff. This person had with much skill taken advantage of the fear which beset the Tsar and his entourage in regard to the action of the Nihilists, as well as the warning advice which the Tsar received from various quarters respecting the ratification of Loris Melikoff's proposals of reform.

At length Alexander, leaving Loris Melikoff still in ignorance, asked Pobiedonostseff to draft a manifesto through which the new Tsar intended to acquaint his people with the internal policy he proposed to follow in future. On the manuscript of Loris Melikoff's project of reform he had written with his own hand his opinion that it was "particularly well done," had left the majority of the Ministerial Council, as well as the author of the project, in the belief that he agreed with them, and had, moreover, distinctly expressed himself to that effect to his brother, the Grand Duke Vladimir. Yet Alexander III. was, according to the unanimous testimony of all who knew him well, a thoroughly honourable man, and, therefore, the deliberate desire to deceive the majority of his Ministers cannot be attributed to him. In that case the only other explanation is to conclude that he had not in the least

understood the contents of that document, although he had characterised it as well done, unless this expression of approval had been merely made in the sense that the writing was well executed.

He understood just as little as all that had preceded it the contents of the instrument that Pobiedonostseff had drawn up and submitted to him for approval. At any rate he does not appear to have realised that the instrument in question was in the sharpest contrast with Loris Melikoff's "particularly well done" proposal, since on Loris Melikoff and the Ministers Miliutin and Abasa tendering their resignation after the publication, without their previous knowledge, of the ultra-reactionary manifesto, the Tsar displayed the greatest astonishment and anger at their action. He had never imagined that his manifesto would have made such an impression on the liberals. He had no clear idea that by this manifesto he had proclaimed his full adherence to the reactionary party, although he had obtained from Pobiedonostseff a crowd of phrases bearing on the gravity and significance of the autocracy.

What he himself thought of the business is apparent from a letter of his to the Grand Duke Vladimir dated the 27th April (9th May), 1881. This letter, the authenticity of which cannot be doubted, ran as follows:—

"I send you, dear Vladimir, a draft of the manifesto accepted by me. I wish it to be made public on the 29th April (11th May). I have been thinking a long time over it. The Ministers are constantly promising measures which will render the manifesto unnecessary; but as I cannot get them to take any decided step, and the minds of the people are still in a state of excitement and expectation of something extraordinary, I determined to ask K. P. Pobiedonostseff to draw up a manifesto showing clearly in what way I shall manage affairs, and stating that I shall never consent to any

limitation of the autocracy, which I consider necessary and advantageous for Russia. The manifesto seems to me to be very well advised. It is approved in its entirety by Count Stroganoff, who agrees with me as to the opportuneness of such a step. I read it to-day to A. V. Adlerberg, who welcomed it most cordially. Therefore, with God's help, forward!"

Nobody except the Tsar considered the manifesto to be an advance. "This is a betrayal, a reactionary *coup d'état*," exclaimed Loris Melikoff when, on the 29th, he was informed of the manifesto. He saw that he had been thoroughly outwitted by the reactionaries, who had carried on their work so secretly that none of the Ministers who supported him had any foreboding of the project and publication of the manifesto.

They had lost the game. Pobiedonostseff and his party had succeeded in acquiring that influence over the Government of Russia which they are to this day exercising, to the injury of their own and all other nations.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SLAVOPHILES IN THE DEVELOPMENT.

THE proclamation drawn up by Pobiedonostseff and issued in the name of Alexander III. inaugurated a new period for the social and revolutionary development of Russia. As to its social aspect, the development, so far as it depended on the Government and those in authority, was constantly retrogressive. For the revolutionists the reign of Alexander III. was a period of concentration, observation, a turning to account of the experiences gained, and a gradual reorganisation of revolutionary work. At the outset, indeed, the terrorists continued their activity by means of the executive committee. During the first few years several death sentences on officials, high and low, who had raged with especial brutality against the revolutionists, were pronounced and executed, and schemes were also projected for further attempts on the Tsar himself. But those who had not, as in the former period, worked themselves up to such a pitch of fanaticism in the service of the terrorists as to lose all further thought of social conditions, could not but realise that the chances of the action of the terrorists being successful had vanished.

The Tsar lived as a prisoner in his castle at Gatschina, where he was so strictly guarded that any attempts on him were impossible. He came very seldom to the capital, and then always so unexpectedly, that no preparations could be made to waylay and slay him on any of his flying visits. The government was left entirely in the hands of the

Ministers, who, as a rule, owed their places to intrigues, favouritism, and similar machinations, rather than to any intelligence or ability of their own. To put any of them or their subordinates out of the way would probably make no deep impression. The reactionary system was not represented or maintained in their persons, although they were in its service. With or without them the system continued on the same basis which Alexander III. had given it by the manifesto of Pobiedonostseff, and was kept up by the men, the party—the Slavophile party—in whose interest the Procurator of the Holy Synod had worked, and whose influence he had made use of, although he himself could hardly be said to belong to the party.

The development had fallen back into the old grooves. The liberals had, at one blow, been deprived of all control over the course of events. The revolutionists could certainly have continued the struggle merely against a reactionary Government, but against the reactionary current, which Slavophilism represented, the prospect of their action being successful diminished in the same ratio as Slavophilism acquired strength. The revolution was compelled to adopt an expectant attitude, discover new methods, work them out, and generally to reorganise itself in accordance with the newly inaugurated social development. Therein also lay the seeds for revolutionary development in case Slavophilism should not result in removing the deep causes of complaint and discontent. It becomes, therefore, necessary to study carefully the different phases of the social development; for in this way only is it possible to understand the reasons underlying the progress of the revolutionary movement, its expansion and acquisition of strength, until it has become what it is in our day, a power which bids fair to transform the Russian State.

Slavophilism was, as we have previously remarked, no

more a new symptom in political Russia than its offshoot, Panslavism. Nor was Slavophilism originally more absolutely political in character than any other of the political currents in the Empire; it was merely philosophico-social. Its real founders, the brothers Constantine and Ivan Aksakoff, had as young men been intimately connected with Herzen, Bakunin, Bielinski, and other advanced liberals who at a later period adopted radical revolutionary or anarchical doctrines.

The development of Slavophilism proceeded on opposite lines, and resulted in a conservatism of an extreme reactionary character. At first its efforts, in contrast to the then prevalent tendency in Russia to give the preference to everything foreign, to Europe at the cost of Russia, were simply directed to place and esteem everything Russian far above the imported article, until Slavophilism gradually degenerated into an absolutely blind contempt for all Western culture, and, as a natural corollary, into an equally blind admiration for everything genuinely Russian. Moscow was the headquarters of this movement, the leaders being Ivan Aksakoff, who succeeded his brother Prince Constantine, and the notorious Katkoff, who made Slavophilism a political factor of the first importance by gradually twisting its principles until they became the best support of absolute autocracy.

The earlier, unadulterated programme of Slavophilism is sketched in the remarkable memorandum which Constantine Aksakoff, through Count Bludoff, handed to Alexander II. shortly after his succession to the throne in the year 1855. In this memorandum its author condenses the doctrines of his party into fifteen points, the most important of which we may be allowed to quote:

1. The Russian people, which consists of no political elements, renounces the exercise of the highest authority, and entertains no desire to govern.

2. As it does not entertain such a wish, it remits unlimited authority to the Government.

3. As compensation for this the Russian people reserves for itself intellectual liberty, liberty of conscience, and the right to live free.

4. Unlimited power without the participation of the people can only assume the form of absolute monarchy.

5. The organisation of the Russian State rests on the basis of the following principles: for the Government (which is necessarily monarchical) absolute political and administrative power; for the people full intellectual liberty and the right to live free, also liberty of conscience, thought, and speech. All that the people, in the absence of all authority, can and may offer to the initiative of the Government, is opposition (therefore a purely moral force), which the Government is at liberty to consider.

6. These principles may be infringed by either party.

7. Should the people infringe these principles, or place restrictions on administrative authority, or participate in the government, the people is resorting to outer force, is leaving the right path of true intellectual liberty, and becomes morally of less importance.

8. If the Government infringes these principles, or places restrictions on intellectual liberty, the right of the people to live free, and liberty of conscience, the absolute monarchy is transformed into a despotism, an immoral government, stifling all the energies of the people and deteriorating its character.

9. The primary principles of the State are not infringed by the people if they at the same time represent the peculiarly national fundamental principles, but they are by the Government; that is, the latter has fettered the intellectual liberty of the people, restricted its right to live and its liberty of conscience, thought, and speech, and by such action has become a common despotism, oppressing the intellectual life

and manly dignity of the people, which will ultimately lead to the decay of intellectual force and society in Russia. Despotism threatens to bring about in the future the degradation and final collapse of Russia, to the joy of its enemies, or else the effacement of the Russian principles among the people itself, which now, finding itself robbed of its intellectual liberty, seeks to acquire political liberty, turns towards revolution, and abandons the right path. Both these outlooks are equally alarming in so far as they will both result in destruction, the first in material and intellectual, the last in intellectual destruction only.

10. Therefore the violation of the principles of the national life of Russia results in the destruction of the intellectual liberty of the people, and is the root of all manner of evil in Russia.

11. The amelioration of its condition depends evidently on the Government.

12. The Government has laid a heavy yoke on the intellectual life of Russia, and it is its duty to remove this yoke. The Government has fallen away from the most important national Russian principles, and must return to them. These principles are—

For the Government unrestricted administrative power; for the people absolute intellectual liberty, the right to live free, with liberty of conscience: for the Government liberty of action and, therefore, the liberty to legislate; for the people liberty of thought and, therefore, liberty of speech.

13. Not satisfied with the existence of liberty of speech and its consequence, a general opposition, the Government, in certain cases, experiences a real need of calling such an opposition into being. In what way can it be invoked by the Government?

The Russia of the olden times shows us how this must be done. Our Tsars were accustomed, at important junctures,

to create an outlet for the expression of the general opinion of the opposition by calling together the *zemski sobor*, or national assemblies, to which delegates were sent from all classes and from all parts of Russia. A *zemski sobor* of this kind was called for no other purpose than to take part in the general opposition, which the sovereign might take into account or not, just as he liked.

The contradictions in this "programme," to say nothing of its obscurity, "jump to the eye." "An enlightened and liberal absolutism" was the dream of the earlier Slavophiles —unlimited power for the sovereign, but rights for the people all the same, a system of government which could only be realised by an ideal man, not by one afflicted with the imperfections of human nature.

But it was by this very obscurity, this piling up of impossible parts into a common whole, which, clad in the phraseology of the Slavophiles, looked so pretty and feasible, that the representatives of the new doctrines succeeded in entangling the idea of a great portion of the Russian people. Slavophilism in no way injured the Tsars; its unlimited authority was one of the corner-stones of the edifice; it stood up for liberty of conscience and speech, and therefore pleased the liberals. By insisting on the right belonging to the people to live free it won for itself the sympathies of all who saw in the liberation of the serfs the fundamental condition for the future development of Russia. It was only the most far-sighted who realised the impossibility of constructing a State system of a lasting character out of the heterogeneous material jumbled together by the Slavophiles. To all the rest the principles of Slavophilism were attractive enough, especially where they pandered to the national Russian feeling, or rather the national vanity.

"In the eyes of the Slavophiles," says Leroy Beaulieu in his previously quoted work "L'Empire des Tsars et des

Russes," "Russia is essentially different from Europe. Possessed of its own characteristic institutions, handed down to it from remote times, it is by its origin and evolution appointed for an altogether different destiny. In the manner in which the territory of Russia has been populated, in the Russian idea of the family life, of property, and the ruling authority, Russia looks forward to another civilisation, and naturally, of course, as far as local patriotism is worthy of confidence, to a better-balanced, more stable and harmonious civilisation, more capable of making real progress without any definite object than the obsolete, effeminate civilisation of Western Europe, whose internal conflicts are bringing it to the verge of collapse."

Such was the Slavophilism of the brothers Aksakoff before Katkoff made it his own and made capital out of it for political purposes which were also his own. Katkoff himself in his young days, when he belonged to the university of Moscow, had paid court to liberalism, nay, even to radicalism. He also had belonged for some time to the "Stankewitch" circle, like Herzen, Bakunin, the brothers Aksakoff, and Bielinski, and, in those days, had shown himself anything but sympathetic towards the views which the founders of Slavophilism were fighting for. At a later period he became the publisher of a liberal journal, editing it for no less than six years and in that way acquiring a practical knowledge of every situation and condition. Thus he was thoroughly equipped for the work when at last he assumed the position of chief editor of the *Moskowskia Viedomosti*, the only Russian newspaper which had really ever had any influence in directing the development of the country.

Katkoff in a short time transformed Slavophilism into Panslavism. He preached unceasingly, with great force and skill, from the text that Russia had a mighty mission to fulfil in Europe. Her historical task was to fuse under her banner

the entire Slavonic race into one sole invincible civilised people and to enforce this civilisation on all other nationalities that had already been, or might still be, brought under the dominion of Russia. All that was not Great Russia in the Russian Empire was hateful to him, the Baltic provinces as well as Poland, Little Russia no less than Finland; but Finland most of all, because she was more independent and progressive in everything outside Russian civilisation. Against all these elements of the people which did not conform in language, race, sympathies, and ideas to the Muscovite standard he directed his attacks with impartial violence, while, at the same time and with no less violence, he constituted himself the defender of all the Slav families in Austria and the Balkan peninsula against the Powers to which they were subject.

It was the influence of the Panslavists, and above all of the *Moskowskia Viedomosti*, which drove Alexander II. to make war against Turkey. The Servians had taken up arms in order to free themselves absolutely from Turkish rule. Bulgaria was in a state of agitation and the scene of savage deeds of violence, and Servia threatened to succumb in the unequal struggle she had so long maintained. Katkoff and the other Panslavists experienced no difficulty in creating a feeling in Russia on behalf of "our suffering brothers" in the Balkan peninsula until it became so powerful as to drag all and everybody along with it.

The influence of Katkoff and his paper consequently acquired a tremendous importance. Whatever he said made its impression everywhere and carried immense weight in all except liberal and socialistic circles, where it was only too well recognised that the Panslavistic-Slavophile policy, as represented by Katkoff, was sailing with all canvas spread towards the worst possible form of reaction.

The *Moskowskia Viedomosti* and its chief editor, who during the Polish insurrection of 1863 had with blood-

thirsty cynicism championed the most inhuman punishment for the rebels, now directed their fury against the socialistic propaganda and the revolutionary movement. The barbarous methods of oppression adopted by the Government found no warmer defender than Katkoff, who was constantly demanding ever greater rigour, more thorough-going reprisals in the shape of arrests, banishments, and executions; and simultaneously the intensity of his hatred advanced to the highest point against the non-Russian nationalities which had had the misfortune to become incorporated with the Russian Empire. At the time of the death of Alexander II. the original Slavophilism, more socialistically philosophical than really political, was completely ousted by the undiluted Panslavistic-Slavophile policy of which Katkoff had made himself the spokesman.

The successful bomb attempt provided him with the unsought-for opportunity of again entering the field with the full force of his artillery. The opposition of all shades, from moderate liberals to terrorists, were to be rooted out by all possible means, even if it cost rivers of blood. The Tsar's Government ought not to and must not display the slightest sign of meeting the wishes of the liberals, or mildness to the enemies of the Tsardom. Now or never was the time to direct the destiny of Russia along the only proper road which could save the Russian people; now was the time to extirpate root and branch that pernicious West European civilisation which for decades past had kept Russia in a state of commotion, leading at last to regicide.

After this fashion thundered the *Moskowskia Vicdomosti* and its many satellites, of more or less importance and standing. That the reforms in question, which had been embodied by Loris Melikoff, agreed to a certain extent with the programme of the Slavophiles, as drawn up by their founders and leaders, mattered nothing whatever to Katkoff and his adherents.

Early in the year 1881 Ivan Aksakoff had obtained permission from Loris Melikoff to publish in his paper, the *Russ*, the memorandum which his brother Constantine, twenty-one years previously, had caused to be handed to the Tsar just to show him that the proposal of reform which was then in the air might reckon on the support of the Slavophiles. The publication took place when Alexander II. was struck down by the terrorists' bomb, and was continued during the following days under the Government of the new Tsar, that Tsar who had been Ivan Aksakoff's disciple.

Katkoff paid no attention to this proceeding, neither did Pobiedonostseff, who had at that time entered into an alliance with him. They succeeded in enforcing their points of view, and so it came about that during the time of Alexander III. the Panslavistic type of Slavophilism as developed by Katkoff won general recognition. This is described by Herbert A. Thompson in the following quotation from his interesting work "Russian Politics":—

[The Slavophiles are the only party] "which has excited any special attention, because it was the first that dared to raise its head in public, to publish and discuss its views in the newspapers, and which during its most active but least honourable period possessed as its organ a newspaper of extraordinary energy, influence, and power. The principles of the party as regards internal politics are, in the main, the same as those which Japan forsook not long since, and which China will, perhaps, be compelled to abandon. In Russia, this party is the modern embodiment of the conservatism which set itself in opposition to Peter the Great, and on which he flung himself with all the might of his personality."

This was the party which, through Pobiedonostseff, ruled Russia in the reign of Alexander III., and which, in the main, rules at this day. The confused, but for the people painfully and idealistically artless, teachings of the Slavophiles

had been gradually distorted and falsified until they became the basis of the most reactionary despotism known to the Europe of our day, with the sole exception of Turkey. Even Ivan Aksakoff could not keep to the standpoint which the memorandum of his brother had set forth, but fell back more and more into the reaction headed by Katkoff and Pobiedonostseff, which little by little abandoned the name of "Slavophilism"; the result being that the few remaining old-fashioned Slavophiles, like the liberals, gradually withdrew from the sphere of politics, in which they could no longer exercise any influence.

CHAPTER IX.

ALEXANDER III. AND HIS MINISTERS.

A WHOLE library of biographies of Alexander III. has sprung up during the comparatively short period that has elapsed since his death. Tragic in itself, but for Russia and the Russian people a real calamity, the conflict of which he was the victim during the whole period of his reign, between the honest, narrow-minded, and ignorant but well-meaning man Alexander Romanoff and Russia's autocratic Tsar, Alexander III., could not but invest his reign with the greatest interest. The particulars we possess concerning him as a man, his happy domestic life, his unaffectedness when he felt himself free from the cares of government and court formalities, his untiring, persevering devotion to work; all these and other traits of his character have made it impossible for the majority of people to understand how the condition of Russia, during the whole period of his reign, grew gradually worse in every direction.

People have asked, and still ask, themselves how it was possible that a man imbued with an undoubted desire to promote the welfare of his people, and possessed of such power as the autocrat of Russia wielded, could not carry out one of all the things he desired. One wonders how it was possible that injustice, oppression, inhumanity, corruption, and arbitrariness could, under a Tsar who exhausted himself in his efforts to put an end to existing abuses, become ever more intolerable and general until discontent with the system of government reached a point when the whole of

Russia was thrown into such a state of ferment that force alone was able to prevent the outburst of an explosion.

Many biographers have endeavoured to answer these questions more or less directly. That they have met with so little success in doing this satisfactorily must be attributed to the fact that the writers were not always well informed as to the condition of things in Russia which made such a discontent and development possible; consequently they have been unable to see that the apparently unrestricted autocratic power of the Tsar can, so far as he himself exercises it, be hardly called a power, at any rate not when its possessor is unable to form an opinion for himself as to how it should be wielded in order to become a blessing and not the reverse.

That Alexander III. should have made so very ordinary a ruler was due just as much to his training as to his poor natural gifts. Up to his twentieth year he was kept entirely in the background. His education was exclusively military. His father, Alexander II., had the idea that of all his sons only the eldest, the successor to the throne, should be instructed in any great range of subjects.[1] It was not till after the death of this son that the Tsar induced his second son to make himself acquainted with all matters that would enable him worthily to fulfil the responsible duties of the position that awaited him. It was, however, too late. Neither his qualifications nor his interests were of a character to permit him when a grown man to recover the ground he had lost. The little knowledge he did acquire was barely a scintilla of what he should have possessed in order to become a tolerable ruler; he had not learned enough to make himself thoroughly familiar with the routine business of government.

To this was also to be attributed the obstinate self-will

[1] Krapotkin, who was once on an intimate footing at court, relates this fact in his book "Memoirs of a Revolutionist."

with which he clung to an opinion once formed, no matter who had suggested it; and hence, moreover, his dislike of more than ordinarily gifted and eminent men. In one of the best biographies of him that we have, namely, that of Samson von Himmelstierna, entitled "Russia under Alexander III.," the author, whose intimate familiarity with all circumstances bearing on the subject is apparent on all hands, says that the Tsar would tolerate no other man near him but those who were on a less intellectual plane than himself, and that, consequently, only very average people were appointed as Ministers. He was always arfaid of falling under the influence of some Minister, and endeavoured in this way to ensure his independence, without imagining how absolutely the influence of the Katkoff-Pobiedonostseff cabal determined everything, or how skilfully the Procurator of the Holy Synod put decisions into his head which he took for his own, whereas they were in reality the creation of others.

The author just cited is, however, not altogether correct, because both Count Dmitri Tolstoi, who was Minister of the Interior for many years, and Pobiedonostseff possessed a far higher standard of intelligence than the Tsar. They had the tact, however, to conceal their superiority, allowing everything to appear as if the initiative and views of the Tsar were alone decisive, and in this way they succeeded in gaining his confidence and asserting their influence. The chief thing for them, as well as the other Ministers, was never to hurry business, never to forestall the Tsar, but to interest him unconsciously and familiarise him with the ideas which they desired to see embodied in his administrative measures; then, later, they would seize a suitable opportunity to induce him to take the desired decision.

This was the easier to do as there never was in Russia, any more than there is to-day, a Ministry in the correct sense.

Each Minister deals directly, and quite independently of his colleagues, with the ruler on all matters relating to his department. Each one makes out his own report, or has it made out for him, without informing the other Ministers as to the direction in which he is guiding the policy connected with his own affairs. With such a system, it is very easy to understand that a ruler who does not possess the necessary ability to grasp and control the whole situation cannot, with the best will in the world, resist the influence of his Ministers. The incapacity of Alexander III. in this respect was a consequence of all the circumstances which contributed to mould his character and habit of thought; and in this connection we may take the opportunity of throwing more light on him by reference to works whose authors have made him the object of exhaustive study or have had special opportunities of observing him, and are therefore in the best position to form an opinion of him.

In his work on the Jews in Russia, "The New Exodus" (p. 136), Harold Frederic gives us in the following words a picture of the Tsar who encouraged the Jewish persecution:—

"Alexander III. is a man of very limited ability and knowledge, who cannot very well think of more than one thing at a time, and that only very slowly. He has no idea of system and no executive capacity. If he were a mere ordinary citizen, he would hardly be entrusted with the management of a single village community. It is really an irony of fate that he should be called to be the responsible ruler over half a million village communities.

"He has a very strong feeling in regard to the loftiness of this responsibility, and strives untiringly to fulfil his task so far as he understands it. With the exception of a few brief intervals of leisure passed with his family, he works till two or three in the morning studying documents, considering

proposals, and signing papers of all kinds. No man in the Empire is more intensely occupied than he.

"The pity of it is that all this exhausting work should result in absolutely nothing. So far as the real government of Russia is concerned he might just as well pass his time in wheeling a barrow of bricks from one side of the brick-yard to the other. Even when it is clearly understood what 'Russian government' really means, how, with its countless number of officials, it seeks to carry out the gigantic labour of personally supervising every individual unit in a mass of one hundred millions, and all this through the most corrupt agents in the world, even then no idea can be formed of the utter hopelessness of it all.

"Alexander III. is simply wearing himself out at one petty corner of the pyramid of current work which his Ministers pile before him. Compared with him, Sisyphus is altogether out of it.

"This slow-thinking man, unsparingly burdened with work, knows as little of what happens in his immediate vicinity as of the greater events of contemporaneous history transpiring in the outside world. He was already a full-grown man when the death of his brother pushed him into the foreground as heir to the throne. A belated attempt was then made to graft on his weak and meagre intellectual tree some of the knowledge which it behoved a future emperor to possess. He was laborious and willing. Some of his teachers acquired a powerful personal influence over him, an influence which, at a later period, had such pernicious results, but in other respects effected nothing."

Another writer, Mr. Lowe, the *Times* correspondent, whose opportunities of studying persons and events extended over a long period, alludes to him as follows in his book "Alexander III. of Russia" (pp. 183, 184):—

"It was known that he was the most uncompromisingly

zealous champion in Russia of the three Slavophile principles: autocracy, Eastern orthodoxy, and nationalism, one king, one religion, one law; and it soon became evident that he was firmly determined to enforce these principles in their strongest and most unmistakable sense.

"He had the choice of three alternatives: either to maintain the *status quo*, to advance in the same direction as Austria to decentralisation, or else to attempt to nationalise the Empire at the expense of the oppressed nationalities for the benefit of the paramount 'Great Russia.' Anyone who stood in the way of these designs, were he Jew, German, or Swedish Finn, must reconcile himself to the fact of being suppressed. In order to carry out this policy time was necessary; for if a war had broken out, and an enemy had invaded Russia, a revolution might possibly have been the result, which would not only have rendered the process of union more difficult, but have shattered the stability of the State. It was, therefore, of the highest importance for the Tsar's policy that peace should be secured, in order to give him time to carry out the changes which he had in view; and although Alexander III. was awarded praise on all sides for keeping the peace in his external affairs, this was only done because of the fear of internal disturbances in which he threatened to plunge a great part of his people."

It would be superfluous to attempt to shed a further light from further quotations on the unanimous opinion entertained respecting Alexander III., whose estimable personal qualities were admitted by everyone in the same degree that his intelligence and ability as a ruler were held in contempt. His dislike of being brought into contact with others increased as the years rolled on, until the Ministers themselves had at last to submit their proposals in writing. He evidently thought that this was an easy way of escaping from their influence, and it is quite possible that this stratagem

succeeded as regards most of the Ministers; but the particular influence which dominated him from the beginning of his reign—the influence of the Procurator of the Holy Synod—he could not get rid of on any account. He, therefore, persevered to the end of his time in the Panslavistic-Slavophile policy which, through Pobiedonostseff's manifesto, he had promised to pursue.

The influence of the Procurator on Alexander III., and through him on the government of Russia, dated from the time when, after the death of the original heir to the throne, he was ordered to instruct Alexander in the system of government. Although at that time he occupied no particular position, Pobiedonostseff had become well known as an earnest, hard worker, and a skilled jurist; he was consequently entrusted with the important charge of training the future ruler in those matters which he must learn first of all in order to govern his enormous empire. The teacher fulfilled his obligation with the greatest zeal and success in the direction he intended. By temperament a cold-blooded calculating fanatic, he succeeded in instilling into the heir to the throne his own blind belief in the ability of the Greek orthodox teachings and absolutism to direct the destiny of Russia along the only path which could save land and people. It was also his fortune to inoculate his pupil with that intolerance and hate towards Nonconformist belief and thought which were so characteristic of the later years of Alexander's reign. The earnestness displayed by Pobiedonostseff, his zeal, his conviction that Russian orthodoxy and the Russian Tsardom were called upon to make not only Russia, but also the rest of Europe and all mankind, happy—in a word his thoroughness and his personal integrity were bound to have a strong effect on Alexander III., who had been brought up in a court where corruption, intrigues, favouritism, and adventurers flourished shamelessly and in broad

daylight. Compared with the vacillating policy pursued under Alexander II., the system inaugurated by Pobiedonostseff seemed consistent, strong, and hopeful, and among the opportunist statesmen of that time it was the only one that adhered firmly to a fixed theory. Hence Alexander III. drew the conclusion that this theory was the only correct one.

In the year 1880 Pobiedonostseff was made "Procurator of the Holy Synod," in succession to the later Minister of the Interior, Dmitri Tolstoi, with which appointment he was well content, although no one doubted that it depended only on him to exchange it for a much more splendid position. This also explains to a great extent the fact of his retaining power so long, and the unselfishness which he always displayed in not appearing to seek for power, but, on the contrary, keeping himself as much as possible in the background and contenting himself with the actual exercise of authority.

In itself the position which he holds is of no great account; it is only by personal qualities that his influence has made itself felt in the government of Russia. His office corresponds in a general way to that of the Minister of Worship in the West European countries. The Procurator is the representative of the Tsar and the only non-clerical member of the highest ecclesiastical body of Russia, the "Holy Synod," which is otherwise composed of the Metropolitans of Novgorod, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kolomna, and Kieff, together with nine other members, bishops, ecclesiastical dignitaries, and officers who are called together from time to time. No decision of the Synod is valid unless it is approved by the Procurator, who, in important matters, appeals to the Emperor and sends in his own report on the matter. The orthodox ecclesiastical educational institutes of the Empire, the religious seminaries and schools,are under his control and direction, and the Procurator has a seat both

in the Ministerial Council and in the Imperial Senate. In all matters directly or indirectly affecting the State Church his opinion must be consulted, and he stands in every respect on the same footing as the Ministers proper.

Up to the death of Alexander II. Pobiedonostseff had no more influence than anyone else would have had in the same position; perhaps less, because Alexander II. detested all kinds of fanaticism, and because he was during his later years under the influence of Loris Melikoff, whose political ideas by no means agreed with those of the Procurator. If the latter during the time he was the tutor of the new Tsar had not been able to win his confidence, it is highly probable that the Procurator of the Holy Synod would have remained in his original obscure position; but, thanks to his personal connection with Alexander III., he succeeded to such an extent in thwarting the latter's intention of executing, out of respect to his father, the reform projects of Loris Melikoff, that the Tsar was in the end actually content to accept his political programme from Pobiedonostseff.

How this programme was carried out altogether under the direction of the Procurator will be set forth later on. It may be as well to mention here, in regard to this powerful personage, that his ostentatious piety (he retires every year to some particularly holy cloister to give himself up to religious contemplation), his indisputable and undisputed honesty, his learning and knowledge of West European literature and civilisation, his extensive juridical studies, and his cynical, cold-blooded sophistry—all these qualities have tended to make him one of the most dangerous instruments of reaction, such as he is at the present day. "Honesty, zeal, intrepidity, and sincere devotion," as Samson von Himmelstierna says in the book we have already quoted from, "to a cause rotten through and through; the capacity and means of utilising modern civilisation for an unworthy and

reactionary purpose "— can any more evil or more perilous combination be imagined?

Pobiedonostseff's predecessor in the Procuratorship of the Holy Synod was Count Dmitri Tolstoi, who had also been Minister of Education, and had led the system of national instruction into a sad muddle, from which it has not emerged even at the present day. There has, perhaps, hardly ever been a Minister so cordially detested as Dmitri Tolstoi; none so universally and heartily cursed as he. When he was dismissed in 1880 at the instance of Loris Melikoff, there was not a single newspaper in Russia, excepting the official organ, that did not openly describe his administration as a curse to Russian education.

Two years later Alexander III. made him Minister of the Interior, in succession to Ignatieff, the "lying Pacha," as, according to Krapotkin, he is said to have been called during his ambassadorship in Constantinople. This personage during his short term of service as Minister of the Interior had tried all kinds of methods of administration, but to no purpose, until at last it occurred to him to make certain of the support of the liberals by submitting, as he is said to have done, a proposal to the Tsar to give a trial to the convocation of an advisory assembly on the same lines as that of Loris Melikoff. In spite of his influence with the Tsar, Pobiedonostseff thought it advisable to call in the counsel of others, and spoke about the proposal to Count Tolstoi.

"Why kick against the ordinary order and course of administrative affairs," said Tolstoi, "by convoking a National Assembly when the open, free opinion of the country can be obtained in a much simpler way? You have only to send a circular to all the provincial governors requesting them to send in reports on public opinion in their respective provinces, and you have only to read the replies to be made acquainted with the general opinion in the country."

This advice seemed so acceptable to the Procurator that he communicated it at once to the Tsar, who, on his part, was so overcome by the statesmanlike wisdom of Tolstoi that he departed from the usual custom of reinstating a Minister who had fallen into disfavour and made Tolstoi Minister of the Interior. He continued true to his traditions and ideas in every respect, and next to Pobiedonostseff contributed the most to make the reign of Alexander III. as reactionary and calamitous as it could be for the mass of the people.

The successor of Tolstoi as Minister of the Interior was Ivan Durnovo, who confined himself to completing the plans projected by Count Tolstoi, especially in regard to restricting the small measure of local self-government granted to the peasants by the introduction of the *zemstvo* institutions.

As regards the other Ministers of Alexander III., only the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Von Giers, played any important part, and he, like the Minister for War, Vannovsky, only managed to keep his place for so long a time by constantly telling the Tsar that he, Alexander, alone directed foreign affairs. Nothing need be said about the others, who were mere mediocrities, going with the stream.

No ruler has been personally less inclined than Alexander III. to pursue a policy which would be injurious to the mass of his people; none has spared himself so little or striven more zealously for the welfare of his empire; yet none has effected the very opposite to what he desired to a greater extent than he. He did all he could to maintain his independence, yet fell so utterly under the influence of others that he constantly carried out their will when he thought he was giving effect to his own plans. Stepniak says that he liked to call himself and to be called the "Peasant Emperor"; but this title was only in so far apt as to mean that the Emperor was a peasant, a *moujik*, on the throne.

CHAPTER X.

THE REACTION UNDER ALEXANDER III.

IT would far exceed the limits of a work like the present if we attempted to narrate in detail how the authorities in the "Peasant Emperor's" reign exerted every effort to hinder the development of Russia on West European lines and to bring her back to the path she had quitted at the time of the liberation of the serfs. It is only in the highest educated circles that these efforts on the part of the rulers can be closely followed; but as one case is more or less a repetition of the others, this should be sufficient to enable the results of the Katkoff-Pobiedonostseff policy to be understood in other directions. The Tsar can hardly be said to have had a policy of his own. Even Nicholas I. exclaimed with an irony that applied to himself more than anyone:—"Russia is governed by ten thousand *stolonatschalniki*" (heads of departments). He was a man of infinitely greater energy and will; yet he could not get rid of the bureaucracy, which theoretically executed his will alone.

Under Alexander II. the intellectual forces of the State were to a certain extent set free when the Government came into direct touch with the peasants, and the development of the means of intercommunication, etc., made it necessary to increase the number of officials and more than doubled the volume of official work. Had only a part of this work, as was intended by the creation of the *duma* and *zemstvo* institutions, been handed over to the different authorities established for local self-government, it would have been

possible for the central Government to exercise some kind of supervision over its deputed instruments. Instead of doing this, it stifled with a truly insane eagerness all co-operative activity of the people, all initiative other than that of the Government, and thus piled up in the different branches of the administration an enormous mass of work which could not possibly be supervised by the central Government. Under Alexander III. it was shown as clearly as daylight that in our time autocracy is, and can be, nothing more than a fiction; that it is, and must be, a mere jogtrot bureaucracy, by far more despotic, by reason of its mechanical nature, than a real monarchy, where the possibility of the existence of human feelings and points of view on the part of the single individual vested with power is not altogether excluded.

A relatively small nation, bounded within a comparatively restricted territory, may be made the object of such a more or less patriarchal-monarchical rule, where the ruler exercises his authority over a small number of individuals, who, in their turn, with an authority only slightly less extensive, rule over the general masses of the community; where, in other words, the social classes are sharply divided, and a secondary class influences those immediately beneath it, answering to the chief ruler for all. Russia was governed pretty much in this way in the olden time, and in part indeed up to the period of the peasant emancipation. It was the Tsar Peter who began to reshape this patriarchal monarchy by introducing the element of European bureaucracy, and his successors carried on the development in the same direction because the continual expansion of the Empire made the retention of the old *régime* impossible. As long as the serfs—that is, the great majority of the people—were only in indirect connection with and in dependence on the Government, which, as far as they were concerned, only dealt with their masters

and owners, there existed on the one hand a certain *raison d'être* for the autocracy, and on the other the partial possibility of exercising it in the shape of personal government by the autocrat. This was a theoretical case in every respect, although practically the conversion of the autocracy into a bureaucratic despotism had made such enormous strides that even in the time of Nicholas I. it had become in every way an accomplished fact, with the sole exception of the serfs belonging to the private landowners. The ranging of the latter among the direct objects of taxation finally completed the system, which, however, for a long time continued in a more or less lax condition. In carrying out the scheme of peasant emancipation the voluntary assistance of the citizens was made use of very extensively, and the reforms that followed in the spheres of administration and legislation—the *duma* and *zemstvo* institutions, together with the judicial system—also demanded the co-operation of the citizens along with and in addition to that of the bureaucracy. Thence arose a conflict that lasted to the time of Alexander's death, in which the bureaucracy, by a series of petty victories, continued to reconquer lost ground, though in the face of such a powerful and ever-increasing resistance on the part of the people that at length the autocrat decided not only to recognise the ground so regained, but also to enlarge the sphere of the citizens' activity.

In this way a real evolution, a development in a constitutional direction, might have taken place, with a gradual and actual restriction of the power of the irresponsible bureaucracy; but Nicholas I. and Alexander II. had, if they had not fully realised it, at any rate been aware that the autocracy had been more and more of a fiction, though it was left to Pobiedonostseff to persuade Alexander III. into the belief of this fiction. In this way the bureaucratic despotism became everywhere and in all departments the

sole dominating power, and its first and greatest care was, naturally, to crush out all traces of civil activity. The first object of this solicitude was the *zemstvo* institution, which from its inception had been a thorn in the side of the reactionaries by reason of its possibilities of development. They dared not suppress it directly. This would have aroused too great an exasperation on the part of the whole nation, and might even have met with resistance from Alexander III., who had—at least, theoretically—the welfare of the people, the peasants especially, at heart. There was, however, not much difficulty in abolishing local self-government in one way or the other, as it had not yet assumed so definite a shape or struck such deep root among the people as to be able to resist the energetic indirect measures with which it was now being attacked.

During the last half of the reign of Alexander II. such measures had already been determined on. The *mirs* of the peasants were left outwardly untouched, but local administration was very much curtailed by the introduction of the system of division into districts, previously mentioned, by which several small *mirs* were amalgamated, according to their size, into a *volost*, whose chief was styled the *starschina*, or "elder." How these *volost* elders ultimately became dependent on the Government officials is described in the following words taken from the work of Leroy Beaulieu, which we have several times quoted:—

"One of the causes of the tendency displayed by the 'elder' to misuse the authority entrusted to him lies in the fact that, contrary to the meaning of the Act of Emancipation, the *ispravniks*, or police officers, have brought these chiefs of districts, who were chosen from the agricultural labourer class, so much under their influence that they, the 'elders,' only too often become mere police agents or instruments. Some of the laws enacted during the last

years of the reign of Alexander II. contributed to this deplorable change. For instance, one of the laws of 1874, in opposition to the Act of Emancipation (in the execution of which the administration was being continually hampered), gave to the *ispravniks* the right to punish or arrest the village chiefs or even to demand their dismissal by the provincial governors.

"Such treatment is not calculated to engender a greater respect for the unpretending duties of these chiefs or to induce the best among the people to assume such an office. The chiefs of the *volosts*, on whom the yoke of the lower representatives of the official world is laid, have succumbed to the weakness, arrogance, and selfishness of the officials on whom they are dependent. Another cause of the blunders which have been remarked in the way the peasants deal with their own affairs is that the *volosts*, which constitute the administrative unit in the country, are of such an inconvenient size. In such an enormous area the chief is hardly known personally to the electors, which makes it easier for him to evade their control. Very often the reason of his election is due to pressure or police dictation. His duties have also become more complicated and pretentious. Instead of devoting his leisure time to them, the *starschina* is developing little by little into a bureaucratic official as dishonest and despotic as the *tchinovniks*, who are not elected at all."

This, however, was not sufficient for the Government. When it compelled the chiefs of the *mirs* and *volosts* to become a kind of *tchinovniks* the latter class of official felt the need of having assistants more familiar with the epistolary art than they themselves. These assistants were chosen by the Government, at the expense of the peasants, of course amongst the village and district clerks, who, in consequence of being on the most intimate footing with the peasants,

were also bound to acquire a considerable influence over their nominal chiefs, the "elders," while they themselves, recruited from by no means the best elements of society, were able, in alliance with the provincial police, to deal with the peasants in any way they liked. The Government has expressly forbidden the appointment of educated men to the position of clerks. No one who had gone through a course of instruction at a "gymnasium," and, naturally, still less anyone who had belonged to a university, was allowed to hold such an appointment. Educated persons are considered as only likely to exercise a pernicious influence over the peasants, and therefore such appointments are only held by individuals whose education just goes so far as to enable them to read and write readily, although they have to deal with the correspondence in connection with all the internal affairs of the villages and *volosts*. As regards these officials and the influence they possess, Stepniak says in his work entitled "The Russian Peasantry" (Part I., p. 166): "The village communes have become a regular source of income to the provincial police, who often collected their revenue in such a way as to remind one of the good old times of serfdom. For instance, in a circular issued by the Ministry of the Interior on the 29th March, 1890, we find the significant admission that, according to the reports filed in the offices of the Ministry, the officers of the provincial police are entitled to have an 'orderly' to carry out their orders and to choose from the communes under their supervision forty to fifty orderlies whom they may employ in domestic service or field work. In some cases the village communes paid, instead of the tribute in gratuitous work, a regular money tax (which the former serfs called *obrok*), which in many provinces, according to the same authority (Ministry of the Interior), amounted to 40,000 and 60,000 roubles per province."

The authorities of the *mir* and *volosts* had thus fallen into the power of the lowest and most corrupt form of bureaucracy. The peasants, however, still continued tolerably free to choose their delegates for the *zemstvo* assemblies, while they could also protest loudly against arbitrariness and force, and did now and again. This, from the bureaucratic point of view, was an abuse which must be put a stop to, and Count Tolstoi, Minister of the Interior under Alexander III., took care to do so in the most thorough-going manner.

In the year 1889 he induced the Tsar to approve and issue a law creating quite a new class of officials, the so-called *zemskie natschalniki* (district chiefs), who were paid by the State. Leroy Beaulieu describes these officials and their power in the following way:—

"Everything relating to the administration, the police, nay, even to the domestic affairs of the commune, is, therefore, referred to the new chiefs of districts, so that the country people find themselves subject to representatives of the nobility.[1] The peasants retain their twofold organisation, *obschtestvo* and *volosts;* they continue to elect the heads of the village communes and the *volosts* (*starosta* and *starschina*), but, before those elected by the communes can enter upon their duties, they must be confirmed in their office by the chiefs of districts, by whom they may even be dismissed from service.

"Furthermore, the chief of a district has the right to punish the village and *volost* elders without investigation. According to Article 62 of the law of 1889, he can of his own authority inflict the following penalties:—police supervision, warning, fines not exceeding five roubles, and

[1] According to the law relating to the district chiefs, these must belong to the nobility. No other qualifications were required of candidates for these appointments.

imprisonment for not more than seven days. The authority of the chiefs of districts extends to the *mirs*, the *zemstvo* assemblies, and the communal officials. For instance, Article 44 of the law provides that the district chief must preside when representatives of the people have to be chosen for the *zemstvo* assemblies of the provinces. Those who have to do duty in the places of election must be confirmed in their authority by him. If any disputes or difficulties arise in connection with the elections they are submitted to him for settlement. The only thing that the Government does not allow him to do is to get himself elected by the peasants of his district. Neither the village nor *volost* authorities can do anything without his consent. The law gives him the right of veto in all matters they deal with."

It should be added that the chief of a district has not the right to dictate decisions to the peasants, but he can indirectly compel them to do almost whatever he likes by simply vetoing any other decision they may come to. Hence it is that the chiefs of districts are, at the same time, the judges in all questions which do not belong to the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts. Finally, they have the supervision over the special peasant courts which have existed in Russia from time immemorial, and decide matters between the peasants themselves and touching their own internal affairs. They decide on the lines of ancient tradition, and can administer punishments, such as enforced labour and thrashing, which the written laws of Russia no longer recognise. In these courts the chiefs of districts have discovered a splendid means of terrorising the peasants, for it is left to them to appoint the judges from the number of candidates selected by the peasants, which judges may also be deposed by the district chiefs, subject, however, to cases being referred to the assembly of chiefs of districts. As these peasant judges receive a comparatively high salary, it can

easily be understood how absolutely they come under the influence of the chiefs.

The Government, however, was not even content with all this. In order to stamp out the last traces of the independence of the peasants, a fresh ukase was issued in 1890 taking away their right to elect representatives to the *zemstvo* assemblies, and ordering that they must only choose candidates from amongst whom the governors, at the instance of the assemblies of district chiefs, could appoint representatives. In this way the authority of the chiefs became more extensive than ever, and the dependence of the people on them—that is, the nobility—greater than ever; so that the latter regained a great part of their dominion over the peasants which they had lost at the time of the emancipation. It is true that the law forbade the chiefs of districts to get themselves elected as representatives of the peasants, but the election of their neighbours was not prohibited, so that they could, just as they liked, exercise a decisive influence, even in the *zemstvo* assemblies, in all matters connected with the peasants.

Let it be said, to the credit of the nobility, that the best among them did not make use of this chance of increasing their power. The Government even found it necessary to modify through the governors that article of the law which provided that the chiefs of districts could only be chosen from the nobility of the particular district or province, so that they are now chosen from the nobility in general throughout the whole Empire. Nevertheless the status of the chiefs of districts as a body in regard to prominent individuals is shown by the fact that 40 per cent. of them consist of persons whose sole education has been acquired by a course of teaching in the lower schools, which correspond to something like higher national schools.

How these officials, who ruled so unrestrictedly over the

peasants, exercised their power and authority could, if space permitted, be set forth in hundreds of cases taken from the official documents, registers, etc., and newspaper articles passed by the Russian censorship. Just a few of them will suffice to describe the method and character of the new blight with which the Russian people was cursed when the institution of chiefs of districts was introduced.

Among the punishments which could be awarded by the peasant courts previously mentioned was that of thrashing; but the more the peasants became imbued with clearer ideas of their manly dignity the more often was it the custom to suspend the infliction of such punishments for an indefinite period. There it was, nevertheless, duly inscribed on the records of village and *volosts*. One of the first things the newly appointed chiefs of districts did was to drag forth these old sentences and have them executed. Then took place in a number of provinces of Russia a whipping without parallel, to such an extent, indeed, that several governors had to interfere in order to prevent dangerous outbreaks of exasperation on the part of the peasants at this altogether unjustifiable brutality. In the provinces of Tula and Nijni Novgorod the governors issued special instructions in which they admonished the chiefs of the districts to moderate their zeal. In other places, however, the peasants took matters into their own hands, with at least quite as much success. Thus, for instance, in the province of Rjasan they seized the chief of the district, who had especially distinguished himself as a lover of flogging, and administered to him a dose of it that almost jeopardised his life. In the Medin district of the province of Kaluga the peasants set fire to the house of the district commander, while in the government of Vladimir an official of similar degree was likewise flogged, and so forth.

But most characteristic of all, perhaps, is the following

account published by the well-known periodical *Vestnik Europi* (in the December number, 1892); the story was related by Stepniak, the scene of which was the Yuhknoff district, in the province of Smolensk. The *zemstvo* assembly had founded there a so-called agricultural council, with the object of improving the economic conditions of the province. Among the means employed for the attainment of the object in view, the agricultural council decided to purchase useful seeds, chemical manures, improved agricultural implements, etc., in order to give the farmers the opportunity of obtaining at cheap prices and on favourable conditions the articles necessary for conducting agriculture on an improved style. The undertaking succeeded so well that the supply in hand was sold out in a short time, whilst further orders came pouring in. The agricultural council discussed the question of the ways and means to meet the unexpectedly large demand, when an obstacle suddenly arose which put a stop to all activity. The following communication was received from the chief of the district, Titoff: "As I fail to see what need there is of the peasants acquiring better seeds, phosphates, and other fantastic novelties, I, in my capacity of chief of district, must forbid those peasants who are under my command to make any more wanton outlay of money."

This communication was printed in the said number of the best periodical of Russia. It gives us an idea, clearer than long pages of description would do, of the kind of dominion that the chiefs of districts exercise over the peasants under their rule, and proves that Stepniak does not exaggerate at all when he speaks in his work already referred to, "King Stork and King Log," as follows:—

"With such powers the chief of district can do just what he chooses in the villages. He can plunder the communal treasury, all the money being put under his control; he can extort bribes, compel the peasants to work gratuitously upon

his estates "—inasmuch as he compels the peasant courts to sanction such judgments—" and can flog them as freely as did the ancient serf owners. The common peasants are quite defenceless against him. In graver cases they have the right of appealing to the provincial assembly of district chiefs. But who will venture to incur the vengeance of the all-powerful master for the very problematical chance of redress from such an assembly?

"It is impossible to regard such a measure (the introduction of the district chiefship) as anything but the re-establishment of serfdom. And that is what it was meant to be. The chiefs of districts were absolute masters in their domain, and they used their power in a way that forcibly reminds one of 'the good times,' the dream of Count Dmitri Tolstoi and his school, when the millions of peasants were slaves to a handful of nobles."

Alluding to the *zemstvo* assemblies, and how their form was affected by the alteration in their organisation after the ukase of 1890, he says at the end of the chapter from which this extract was taken:

"The old regulations" (of 1864) "gave the nobility an influence in provincial self-government which was quite out of proportion to its numbers. The nobility nominated about one-half of the members of all the thirty-eight *zemstvos*.

"The 'reform' of Count Dmitri Tolstoi goes beyond that. The marshals of the provincial nobility, numbering ten or fifteen in each province, are added to the representatives of the nobility, thus giving the nobility an absolute majority. Moreover, the Government nominates one-fifth of the members, in addition to those elected by the different classes of citizens, and two special officials of the administration sit at the provincial *zemstvos* to strengthen the hand of the Government still further.

"Thus the Government did all in its power to transform

the *zemstvos* into so many bureaucratic committees, obedient to a sign from the Minister. The nobility was the only force that counted in the new *zemstvos*, and it was expected that the exclusive and unwarrantable privileges granted to this class by the new law would act as a bribe to lure it over to the side of the Government. As to the millions of peasants, forming nine-tenths of the population, paying three-fourths of the Budget, and furnishing nine-tenths of the army, they are nowhere to be found on the provincial councils The position of the peasant deputies in the new *zemstvos* is more than subservient: it is degrading, since their immediate chiefs, the chiefs of districts, having almost discretionary powers over them, are also there.

"The liberal *zemstvos* and the liberal Press have often protested against the admission of chiefs of districts to provincial councils.

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"What can one think of a council of any kind in which one member can have other members flogged? The incongruity of such a mutual relation would render the very right of sending deputies a cruel mockery.

"The peasants have been virtually excluded under the *moujik* Tsar from participation in local self-government, even as they have been deprived of many other civil rights."

Further than this it was not possible for reaction to proceed in the diminution of the political and civil rights of the bulk of the people. "Where nothing is, Cæsar's right is lost;" so is his power to take.

Reactionary zeal, however, could still display its activity in other spheres. One of those was religion. In this connection, the reaction, guided by Pobiedonostseff, who under Alexander III. had an absolute control over all that concerned religion, celebrated glaring orgies. The Jews throughout Russia, the Catholics in Poland, the Lutherans in the Baltic

provinces, and the Russian sectarians, the Old Believers, the Duchoborzen, Stundists, Molokans, and the rest, had to experience in the same measure the fanatical oppression of the reactionary nationalism that animated the decrees in Russia.

These decrees were an instrument of religious intolerance and of persecutions which for the greater part were attributed to political reasons. In the application of all the arbitrary means of the Greek orthodoxy the nationalist rulers saw the most appropriate means of Russifying the various nationalities that were not of Russian origin, in the same way that in the persecution of a minority they could always count on the sympathy of the ignorant masses, who would thereby be made to feel that they stood united to the Government by closer bonds.

It was the persecution of the Jews that assumed the greatest dimensions, and side by side with it there grew the most intense bitterness, because in their case other motives were forthcoming, such as hatred of race. To this must be added the sentiment of jealousy awakened by the superior business capacity of the Jews, which in every country contributes to increase the prevailing animosity against the Jewish race. Alexander III. was personally influenced to a high degree by this animosity, and for that reason the more readily inclined to give his consent to the various measures to be taken against the Jews which were suggested from time to time.

The Jews for many years had not been allowed to settle down in any other regions of the Russian Empire but Poland proper, and on the frontiers of Germany, Hungary, Austria, and Roumania, a space of the size of hardly one-eighth of European Russia. Many thousands of them had, however, succeeded in setting a firm foot in other parts of the Empire, and after the year 1865 had been silently tolerated. But towards the end of the reign of Alexander II.

it had already been made manifest in various ways that the authorities looked with by no means favourable eyes upon the presence of Jews in regions other than those previously mentioned, where they enjoyed the lawful right of domicile.

While Count Ignatieff was Minister of the Interior the persecutions broke out all of a sudden. In a great part of South Russia, the lower classes of the town inhabitants, as well as the population of some rural districts, threw themselves on the Jews, maltreated them, plundered their shops and houses, and even slew representatives of the hated race here and there. Starting in Odessa, the persecution spread in a short time from town to town, from province to province, for no apparent reason, and in a manner that had not occurred in Russia in recent years. It was maintained (see Harold Frederic's "The New Exodus") that the Government, or rather the Minister of the Interior, had directly encouraged or instigated the people to commit these deeds of violence. According to the author mentioned, who gives as the source of his information an individual who was among those present at the negotiations, Count Ignatieff is supposed to have avenged himself in this manner for having failed to squeeze out of the Jews in St. Petersburg the sum of one million roubles as a bribe, in consideration of which he would have left them unmolested. They were to purchase from the Count an estate at a price which should exceed by one million its real value, but a hitch occurred in the negotiations, owing to the Minister of the Interior not being able to offer any guarantee whatever that he would carry out his promise. The Jews, moreover, not only distrusted his word, but also feared that he would merely pocket the bribe and treat them after all just the same as their less fortunate brethren. Harold Frederic, in his above-mentioned book, does not treat us, we will readily

admit, to any incredible statements, but neither does he bring any proof forward to vouch for the truth of this remarkable story.

It can be safely stated that the population, in all the regions where the hatred of the Jews displayed itself the most acutely, believed firmly and steadily that the Tsar had issued a secret order to exile the Jews. It is further true that Count Ignatieff, before those laws were established which not long afterwards compelled the Jews to reconcentrate in certain towns, secretly renewed the leases of his own estate with Jewish tenants. But these indications do not suffice to prove that it was the Government, or perhaps only the Minister of the Interior, who had indirectly incited the people to use violence against the Jews. Much nearer to the truth sounds the statement of Stepniak that the first outbreak was spontaneous and the result of race hatred, which in certain parts of Russia had always existed, and had had more than one outbreak before. The authorities did not take sufficient precautions to prevent this first outbreak but closed their eyes, giving rise to the rumour that the Tsar had given orders to persecute the Jews; whereupon the movement spread like wild fire till the Government saw that it had to be suppressed, and to this effect gave categorical orders to the proper authorities.

The disorder was allayed, though not until a number of shocking outrages had been committed on the defenceless Jews. But not long after, in May, 1882, an edict was published with regard to the Jews, wherein the cause of the disturbances was traced to them, and they were as severely punished as if they had been the instigators of the riots. Not only did the Jews in other parts of Russia receive further orders to return to the districts in which they from old time had enjoyed the right of residing, but they were also forbidden to settle down in the country in these districts, or

to rent ground and soil. But the effect of these laws was not great at first. Before they could be applied to a large extent Ignatieff fell into disgrace, and was succeeded by Count Tolstoi, who, without endeavouring to induce the Tsar to revoke the edict, quietly suspended the execution of these laws, and they remained a dead letter the whole of the time that he was in office.

In 1889, however, after Tolstoi's death, Pobiedonostseff assumed the control of the Jews. In the following year the May edict of 1882 was resuscitated, and, further, was declared valid for the eight preceding years; that is to say, it was acknowledged as bearing a retrospective effect for the whole of that period. More than ten thousand Jews who, confiding in the toleration exercised by the non-enforcement of the edict, had settled down on the land in the "lawful" district, and had rented ground, or had retired to other places, were all at once compelled to transfer themselves to regions where they were perfect strangers, and lacked all the means of existence.

The provisions of the edict were carried out with undue severity, and rendered more acute by "explanatory" or additional ukases of a still more inhuman character. At Moscow the Jews were compelled to leave the town in such haste that they did not even have time to sell their household goods and other property. The police hunted them from their dwellings and put their belongings out in the streets. What the fugitives could not take with them had in many instances to be left behind to become the spoil of the multitude. They themselves were not allowed to stop to attend to any business they might have had, but were packed off as criminals to regions indicated to them, the frontiers of which they were not to cross in the future.

At Kieff, in February of the year 1891, thousands of Jewish tradesmen and their families were all of a sudden arrested

and ordered to leave the town within twenty-four hours. Their dwellings were entered by the police at eight o'clock in the morning, and the occupants conveyed direct to the police station, where the tradesmen were condemned to pay a fine of 1,300 roubles each, and their assistants 600 roubles, because they had not complied immediately with a ukase, recently issued, forbidding Jews to keep shops in Kieff. They had always been allowed to reside there, though, in view of the special sanctity of this city, the said prohibition had not been enforced. At noon on the morrow of these arrests the prisoners were packed into railway carriages and conveyed to a "lawful" region without being allowed any opportunity to settle their affairs, in many cases of a complicated nature. And yet the authorities a few weeks previously, in December, 1890, had allowed them to obtain their trading licence and pay the fees. Since, however, when the aforesaid prohibition appeared, those Jews who had not received any special orders from the police did not close and leave their shops, the new ukase was held to have been criminally transgressed; and this was the pretext for no time being granted them to dispose of their warehouses, which were even confiscated as a further punishment.

At Mitau, Riga, Jakobstadt, Libau, etc., where the Jews had settled for fifty years and had been allowed to carry on business unmolested, they were treated in a similar way, especially the well-to-do. In Riga, for instance, a very wealthy merchant, Blumenthal, owner of two factories and a shop, was ordered to quit the town within twenty-four hours for not being lawfully entitled to stop there, and the whole of his immense stock of various goods was confiscated. In Libau the value of one property seized by the police was estimated at 200,000 roubles. In Diniaburg the police were not satisfied with confiscating private property, but impounded the school funds of the Jewish community, which

consisted of 70,000 roubles, and utilised this money to build an orthodox Greek church.

It was in the frontier districts, however, that the Jews were treated with most cruelty. They were forbidden to live at a greater distance than fifty versts from the frontier. From the Baltic down to Galicia they were pitilessly driven from hearth and home, and packed off in masses to the lawful towns. The palpable reason for this measure was that the Jews carried on smuggling on a large scale, and the Government wanted to put a stop to it. No less than 280,000 persons were affected by this ukase, although it is hardly conceivable, notwithstanding the fact that smuggling, like all other trades, was for the greater part in the hands of the Jews, that a quarter of a million people should engage in it. However, all were treated alike, and driven indiscriminately to the towns nearest to the fifty-verst limit. The population of these towns increased within a short time by a million inhabitants, who were driven and dragged there from other parts of Russia without making the slightest preparation to give them shelter, to say nothing of the means of existence. Consequently, enormous distress arose among the hordes of fugitives that arrived from all quarters. At Berditscheff, for example, the number of residents in each house speedily increased fivefold; epidemic diseases broke out, and the death rate, especially among children, was appalling. Thousands upon thousands perished for want of food, through illness and privations of every kind.

Foreign Jews—that is to say, those who did not receive permission to become naturalised in Russia—were expelled absolutely, even if born there, and were ruthlessly put beyond the frontier, although the various Governments whose subjects they were in name flatly refused to admit them in many cases, as, for instance, in Roumania. The distress among the masses of exiles was dreadful, and the

Press of the whole civilised world unanimously protested against this barbarity on the part of Russia. But such protests did not move either the humanitarian Tsar or Pobiedonostseff. Even public hospitals were forbidden to accept Jews as patients, and charitable institutions of different kinds were not allowed to assist them, although in many cases they had done so regularly; even such as owed their existence to the Jews were not exempt.

Want of space precludes us from illustrating by further facts the character of the persecution of the Jews by Paul Pobiedonostseff. A number of incidents of the kind described above, and even more incredible, are to be met with in the official report which Messrs. Weber and Kempster submitted to the Government of the United States upon instructions from the latter to investigate in Europe the cause of the sudden and great increase of indigent emigrants to America.[1] Several of the facts given are taken from Russian papers which had been passed by the censor; others, again, were brought to light by Stepniak from letters from Russian Jews to friends and relatives in other countries not intended for publication. All that has been revealed in connection with these persecutions proves that the Government and authorities, at least since Pobiedonostseff came into power, did their utmost to aggravate as much as possible the already serious situation caused by again enforcing the long-forgotten May edict relating to the Jews in Russia.

That the Government were bent on carrying out their intention must be considered fully proved, though one seeks in vain the guiding motive for these persecutions, worthy of the barbarous mediæval ages. Officially it is said that the presence of Jews in the country is a danger to the peasants, who, through Jewish usurers and tradespeople, sink every

[1] This report, according to the newspaper *Free Russia*, was placed by the Russian censor on the list of prohibited books.

year deeper and deeper into debt. The uncleanliness, dishonesty, immorality, and other vices and failings of the Jews would, it was maintained, only serve to corrupt the people through the force of habit, for which reason it would be more prudent and safer to confine anything Jewish to those districts reserved to them for years past, where their influence could not produce pernicious results.

It is more than credible that these and similar ideas were made clear to Alexander III., and induced him to give his consent to the persecution. But that Pobiedonostseff and others acquainted with the circumstances of the Russian agricultural population did really believe in these reasons is hardly possible. They knew perfectly well that the Christian usurers, who were as numerous as the Jewish, were not one jot better; that the Jewish business people in the country were the only ones who, although often upon exorbitant terms, would and could help the peasants when the latter required assistance until the next crop. They further knew that the Russian people, as regards uncleanliness and untrustworthiness in business, could not be corrupted either by Jews or anybody else, because the Jews, morally considered, stood upon a considerably higher plane than their Christian neighbours and adversaries. Finally, with regard to smuggling, it was no secret, either to the Russian authorities or to other people, that the frontier population, independent of nationality and religion, at all times carried on prohibited trades on as large a scale as circumstances permitted; that even the Russian officials and the frontier soldiers everywhere directly or indirectly took part in smuggling and secured considerable incomes by laxity in the observance of their duties; and that by driving the Jews away from the fifty-verst limit the nefarious business would only go partly into other hands without being in any way suppressed, in fact almost without interruption.

Neither can it be alleged that the idea of making an attempt to convert the Jews to the orthodox faith was lurking behind the persecutions. On the contrary, various circumstances proved that neither the Tsar nor Pobiedonostseff wanted to drive the persecuted to conversion. Formerly, the Jews had always enjoyed, so soon as they were baptised, the same civil and political rights as orthodox Russian subjects, but in the year 1890 a ukase was promulgated providing that not the baptised, but only their grandchildren, descendants in the second generation, should have the full rights of citizenship. The result of baptism was merely to allow the baptised, but not his family, the right to choose his domicile in the Empire. This system of Pobiedonostseff therefore proved distinctly that he did not want to encourage conversion of Jews to the orthodox faith. With regard to them, the motive already suggested for the religious persecution under Alexander III., the attainment of homogeneity in the Empire by the incorporation of Dissenters with the orthodox Church, played no part.

Neither was it a question of blending the Jewish nationality with the Russian; on the contrary, everything was done to keep them separate. Nothing had proved so likely to dissipate the existing race antagonism as instruction and education. Everywhere the Jews had eagerly availed themselves of every opportunity offered to them to acquire culture and knowledge for themselves and their children; and everywhere, in the law as well as in the higher schools, they proved to be more than ordinarily gifted, and to have unusual thirst for knowledge. Consequently a number of Jews, after having completed their studies and passed their examinations at the university, were admitted into the privileged classes, and obtained the right to occupy Government posts and to settle and devote themselves to any pursuits in the Empire. On these also the rulers endeavoured to put a ban. The

union between the Jews and Russians, which had begun to make itself manifest as a result of education and social intercourse, was looked upon by the reactionary nationalism with as much disfavour as the admission of the Jews into privileged circles.

In December, 1896, the Minister of the Interior induced the Tsar to affix his signature to a ukase of the following tenor:—

"Whereas many young persons of Jewish origin are eagerly endeavouring to draw advantages from the higher classical, technical, and professional education, asking every year for admission into the universities, passing their examinations, and continuing their studies at the various superior institutions of the Empire, I consider that the proper course to take is to put an end to this unsatisfactory state of affairs."

To every thinking person the termination of this edict will seem surprising indeed, because from the given premises one would have expected quite an opposite conclusion. But this is due to the fact that only with the greatest trouble can human reason follow the logic of the Russian Government in general, especially in cases where legislation regarding the Jews is concerned. The ukase in question and others issued with the same object entirely excluded Jewish scholars from a number of schools, and in other instances limited them to a small percentage, often one-tenth of the total amount of scholars. In connection with this matter the measures were carried out as inconsiderately as only a genuine bureaucracy can do. At Biely, for instance, a Jewish apothecary wanted his son to enter the "Gymnasium" as student, but was informed by the principal that the vacancies then existing were only in the proportion of one in five, and that before a Jewish student could be received he must fill the last incomplete tenth with Christian scholars. The apothecary petitioned the Minister

of Instruction, asking that the four-fifths formed by Christian scholars be completed by the admission of his boy, as a special act of grace and favour, so that the Jewish scholar should not be excluded on account of the fraction wanting. Count Delyanoff, the Minister of Instruction at the time, declined to entertain the petition, and the apothecary in question was compelled to send two Christian scholars to the Gymnasium at his own expense in order to secure the admission of his son.

There are, of course, very few Jews in a position to bear this expense, and in a large number of towns of the districts where the Jews had the right to reside they formed from 60 to 80 per cent. of the population, so that only a very limited number of Jewish scholars could gain admission to the schools. In other words, the Jews were compelled, so far as could be done, to bring up their children without any education. Furthermore, in order to render the continuance of their studies more difficult to those who had nevertheless succeeded in becoming students at a school, another ukase was promulgated, prohibiting the instruction of Christian children by Jewish pupils. The prohibition was so ruthlessly carried out that at Minsk, for instance, a fourteen-year-old pupil of Jewish descent was expelled from a local school because he had, out of pure friendship, given lessons to the son of a peasant!

Such orders and prohibitions on the part of the Government could not but inspire the people and the lower officials with the conviction that the governing authorities received with favour anything that was likely to aggravate the position of the Jews. Consequently, governors and lower officials now took upon themselves here and there to annoy the Jews, and prepared special orders and regulations for towns and governments, which were often of such a nature that the Jews saw themselves deprived of all right. The

Governor of Odessa, for instance, threatened to drive the Jews from the town should they have the impertinence not to leave to the Christians the best places on railway and tramway cars. The Governor of Kieff ordered the Jewish hospital to be closed, because it happened to be situated only three hundred feet from an orthodox church. At Rostislawl an order was issued threatening the Jews with public flogging in the market-place of the town, if they did not prevent their children from making noises in the street. The Jews of Kieff were likewise forbidden by the Governor to pass through certain streets in which several orthodox churches were built, etc.

At the same time the Government proceeded against all those who, directly or otherwise, dared to protest against the policy of persecution. Nikanor, Bishop of Cherson and Odessa, received a warning from the Holy Synod, because he had declared in a sermon that the persecution of the Jews was in contradiction with the Christian doctrine of pity. A priest in Moscow, named Nemiroff, was dismissed on account of a similar offence. Leo Tolstoi's petition for tolerance towards the Jews was not allowed, by order of the police, to be circulated with the object of obtaining signatures. And a circular from the Minister of the Interior prohibited the publication of opinions against anti-Semitism[1] in the newspapers.

Everything proved the bitter animosity of the rulers against the Jews, though none of the motives which were more or less officially given for this animosity sufficed to explain it. This was partly due to the Tsar's well-known dislike to the Jews, which, under such circumstances, every

[1] An interesting, as well as an elaborate, description of the persecutions of the Jews under Alexander III. is to be found in Stepniak's "King Stork and King Log," which work, with Thompson's "Russian Politics" and "Dissertations in *Free Russia*," as well as the other works quoted, may serve as authorities.

faithful servant of the Tsar thought it his duty to nourish. But a more important part was played by political views which induced the rulers to draw away the attention of the people from the misrule responsible for the revolutionary movement. The idea of a war with a foreign country was out of the question; Alexander III. would not hear of it; yet he easily allowed himself to be persuaded to enter into a campaign against the Jews, considered by him as a pariah caste of humanity, who were not or could not be kept sufficiently apart from his orthodox subjects.

It is more than probable that the Tsar, had he been acquainted with the deep underlying motive of the measures adopted against the Jews, would not have been quite so readily disposed to express his approval of the persecutions; but on this point he was left entirely in the dark. The Jews were described to him as parasites who lived on the labour of the peasants, as the enemies of order and Government authority, always ready to support the Nihilistic and revolutionary efforts which had caused his father's death. The fact that many Jews, in spite of every opposition, had succeeded in obtaining knowledge and culture, and had been a great credit to various districts of Russia, was not of any consideration to him, nor did he even give it a thought. On the contrary, he allowed himself to be persuaded to hunt like wild beasts millions of his subjects so unjustifiably, so inhumanly and barbarously, that this alone would have sufficed to characterise his reign for all time as one of the worst that Russia had seen.

Hardly less inhuman, although due to other motives than fanaticism, was the action of Pobiedonostseff's system towards the various Russian sects which had arisen in the course of time and had assumed a more or less keen opposition towards the orthodox Church. The autocracy, as suggested and desired by Pobiedonostseff, was to gather a great measure

of strength and authority from loyal orthodoxy. The Tsar, as head of the worldly domain, united in his person papal as well as imperial power; he was the ideal autocrat in the eves of the Procurator. From this it followed, on the one hand, that all his other subjects professing a different religion should be converted to orthodoxy excepting the Jews, who stood on a lower footing as a race; and, on the other hand, that all heresy against it should be extirpated by all means available, so that the firm religious bulwark of autocracy should not be undermined.

As lack of space makes it impossible to deal here with any but the principal religious sects and the proceedings of the reaction against them, the following will be quite sufficient to illustrate the policy of the latter in this respect. Those who made themselves most talked about were the Duchoborzen, probably for the reason that through their desperately strenuous, although entirely passive, resistance to the Government they at last obtained the right to emigrate *en masse*.

The Duchoborzen (spirit-seekers, or seekers after the spirit of religion) had for the main point of their doctrine the abolition of all religious ceremonies and the adoration of God "in spirit and in truth," of "the spiritual God whom everybody carries in his heart." According to the Duchoborzen, God is inseparable from man, and dwells constantly in him. War and everything connected therewith they consider as a sanguinary and unlicensed abomination, wherefore they obstinately refuse to enter the army and to take the military oath. Such doctrines, which in the religious sphere protected to the very utmost the liberty of the individual, could not, naturally, but be inimical to the Tsar and attacked by him by all possible means. The Duchoborzen, since the origin of their sect, have been the subject of persecutions on the part of the Government,

particularly during the reign of Nicholas I., who banished them in crowds to Siberia, or compelled them by force to join the army. But neither the one nor the other punishment succeeded in producing the desired effect. In Siberia they continued with extraordinary success to disseminate their views, and they succeeded in converting not only other exiles, but also large numbers of the soldiers of the Tsar. The leader of the sect was transported to the most remote mines, and his followers dispersed in all possible directions. A great number were banished to the Caucasus, where they were plundered and maltreated in the most disgraceful manner by the Government's officials, until the Prince of Mingrelien, whose district had become depopulated on account of the war, asked that the Duchoborzen should be taken as colonists, and provided with land. Within three years great masses of these people and other sectarians closely related to them wandered into the land, which in a short time they made bloom afresh, inasmuch as they steadily increased in number and even attained a prosperity unknown generally amongst Russian peasants. But the Duchoborzen were not to remain in peace for long, not even in a country the wilderness of which they had changed into flourishing land, without being subjected to fresh persecutions that compelled thousands of them to seek shelter beyond the seas.

Closely allied to the Duchoborzen is the sect called Molokanes (milk-eaters), because its followers, in contradiction to the express prohibition of the orthodox Church, consume milk during the periods of fasting. An offshoot from the Duchoborzen sect, the Molokanes had meanwhile progressed farther than their prototype and resisted with greater determination the violence of the ruling powers. In his work "La Russie Sectaire," Tsakni describes the doctrines of the Molokanes in the following words :—

"The Molokanes in private, as in public, life avoid all

formalities and ceremonies. They have no churches; a house, an open yard, or, better still, a field, serves the believers as sleeping place. . . . When the leader appears they all bow to him; he takes his place and begins to read aloud. After the reading hymns are sung to the tune of popular songs, whereupon follows discussion upon the subject read. Every Molokane enjoys complete freedom with regard to religious ceremonies. No general dogma of form or ceremony exists, so that, for instance, the celebration of a marriage with them is limited to a simple civil formality, a mutual agreement, which, with the consent of both parties, can be rendered void, for which the wish of any one of the parties is sufficient. The initiative in matrimonial affairs is left to the young people. 'When the parents want to compel their children to marry against their will, they commit an act against the will of God,' so say the Molokanes. A marriage can only take place before the whole of the community, who decide whether the marriage candidates are in a position to support a family in a spiritual as well as in a material sense, and investigate whether the proposed marriage is made of their own free will and without compulsion from any side whatever."

The ability to read is, in contradistinction to the Russian people, so widely spread among the Molokanes that hardly a member lacks it. To them, as to the Duchoborzen, war is a form of murder; and "no threats of any kind or punishment will induce them to take part in fighting. At the first clash with the enemy they throw down their weapons," says Tsakni.

The Molokanes are the objects of persecution similar to that inflicted on the Duchoborzen. Many communities of them have been banished to Siberia and Caucasian districts; but, far from diminishing their zeal, it has made them adhere more firmly to their doctrine. Wherever they have been taken to,

there they have, thanks to their diligence, their unity, and their reasonable modest habits, been able, comparatively speaking, to attain prosperity, and precisely through these material proofs of the beneficent influence of their doctrine they have made proselytes in spite of all kinds of persecutions. Martyrdom has as little effect on them as the attempts of the Government to stop them from observing their religious customs. Everywhere they are under the strictest police supervision; they are prohibited from meeting for public worship or from assembling at all in larger numbers than two. The meeting of three Molokanes is declared unlawful and punished as a crime. But, in spite of all these measures, the Government has not attained any result other than the conviction that autocracy can never promote the welfare of a people.

Closely allied in spirit with the Duchoborzen is the sect of Stundists, the most active, and consequently the most severely persecuted, during the last two centuries, of the many religious sects which have existed up to the present day in Russia. According to the author of a series of articles in the newspaper the *Christian World*, afterwards published in book form under the title "The Stundists: the Story of a Great Religious Revolt," the sect originated in a village in the neighbourhood of Cherson, and has spread generally amongst the population in the surroundings of Kieff. With regard to the teaching of the Stundists, the author, who seems to be well versed in his subject, speaks as follows:—

"The New Testament, and this alone, constitutes the religion of the Stundists. Theoretically they value in the same measure the Old and the New Testaments, but in practice the latter is their sole guide to faith and life. With regard to the doctrine that everyone may interpret the Scriptures according to his own views, the Stundists

maintain this firmly. Neither the Church, nor the priests, nor the commentator, but only the ordinary individual, has the right and duty to interpret for himself the Scriptures. . . .

"Those who have never resided in Russia can have no idea of the important *rôle* that superstition plays in the religious life of the people by the worship of images of saints (ikons). Every peasant's hut, however poor he may be, contains one or two pictures: Divine beings such as the Saviour, the Holy Virgin, the Almighty, or some of the principal saints. These pictures hang on the walls of every Government office, from the town hall down to the offices of the subordinate police officials; they are to be seen in banks, offices, shops, railway stations, steamboats, and public-houses. . . . Peasants as well as noblemen bow down before these images of saints,[1] and prostrate themselves in prayer before them. The people call them 'God,' and burn sacred oil in front of them. If a Russian in his lifetime experiences a stroke of luck, he ascribes it to this saintly image; if he is pursued by ill fortune, then it is evident that he has not fulfilled some duty or another towards the image, as, for instance, forgetting to refill the oil-cup, not keeping the frame bright, making use of some oath in its presence, or becoming intoxicated. In the churches the favourite pictures of saints are worshipped by thousands of people and made the object of their veneration on important occasions in their lives. This is purely and simply unadulterated idolatry, but forms nevertheless an important feature in the religious sentiment of the people. That is why the courage with which the Stundists, these isolated and defenceless peasants, raise their voices against the national degradation, deserves the highest praise. Another

[1] The author of this book was on one occasion called "heathen" at a post-office in Moscow because, being unacquainted with the prevailing custom of the country, he did not take off his hat in a room where there was an "ikon," of which presence he was reminded by the indignant official.

overbearing element in Russia which the Stundists have most determinedly opposed is priestcraft. It may be said in general that the Stundists are not of the prevailing opinion that it is necessary to support a special official body of priests. As the Stundists refuse to pay the tithes exacted by the priests and protest against the abominable selfishness of those who endeavour to enforce priestly authority, whilst at the same time their way of living offers a strong contrast to that of the priests, it is not to be wondered at that the Stundists and priests are bitter enemies, and that the latter resort, with all the power and might peculiar to them, to the most terrible measures of political persecution, which in later years has soiled so much the Russian Church."

Until the year 1870 the Stundists endeavoured to avoid as much as possible a complete rupture with the orthodox Church; but about this time a number of members of the sect intended to baptise some adults according to the model of German Baptists, who formed colonies here and there in the south of Russia. These advanced Stundists would not hear of any compromise being made in matters of conscience, and consequently assumed a much stronger attitude against the State Church than the sect had done hitherto. The Stundists were robbed of their New Testaments and hymn-books, were forbidden to assemble for worship at the house of the one or the other; their leaders were prohibited from leaving their domiciles in order to encourage and strengthen in their faith weaker communities situated at a distance. Still the Stundists managed to survive these and similar measures in the milder periods of the persecutions. Their number even increased at this epoch.

Matters changed, however, after the accession of Alexander III., when Pobiedonostseff came into power. In 1882 the chiefs of the local police were granted the right to condemn on their own authority peasants who, in spite

of warnings, continued to attend Stundistic meetings, and to inflict fines upon them to any extent. Two years later, seeing that the previous measures had proved useless, a further step was taken. The leaders were condemned to long years of incarceration in the company of common criminals, or banished with their families to distant parts of the country, to which they had to travel on foot at all seasons of the year. But even these precautions had no effect. In the place of the incarcerated and banished leaders fresh ones sprang up, and instead of being suppressed Stundism continued to assume greater extension.

The fact, often proved by history, that martyrdom does not restrain people from joining an intellectual movement, does not seem to have been known to Pobiedonostseff, the soul of the Russian Government; otherwise it can hardly be imagined that, after the failure of his policy of force against the sectarians, he could have kept on formulating further violent measures. After 1888 the Government turned, not only against the leaders of the Stundists, but also against the general bulk of the followers of the sect, and let loose against them all the wild brutality which the Russian bureaucracy and the police had so often exercised. The Stundists were banished in thousands by "administrative process" to Siberia, as well as to the more distant parts of the Caucasian districts. Every country policeman, village magistrate, priest, or any other official could maltreat or arrest the Stundists with impunity, and use against them violence of every kind. The most usual way of rendering life unbearable to them was to impose upon them compulsory labour (the construction and repairing of streets, bridges, and public buildings, etc.); to compel them to keep guard at night-time in their own villages, inciting thereby the people to deeds of violence in their homes and to destruction of their dwellings and property; and further to coerce them into

baptism, or to flog them until they made the sign of the cross, drank brandy, or smoked tobacco, or otherwise did something which their doctrine forbade as being sinful. An endless number of disgraceful outrages were practised on them, incredible in their bestial coarseness, and their impunity, many of these indignities being so infamous that it is impossible to allude to them even in veiled words.

A number of letters, which were sent by the Stundists to Quakers in Pennsylvania, contain minute details of the frightful outrages, and these are confirmed in every gruesome particular by an unanimous declaration from a number of leaders and representatives of the Stundist sect. One of these letters may here be quoted as an illuminating example. It bears the stamp of truth, and is signed "Elias Lisovoi." He writes as follows about what happened to him and his family, and his case is fully corroborated in the above-mentioned declaration of the Stundist leaders:—

"I describe to you, my dear brothers, what happened to us here. The elder of the village, the village policeman" (*uriadnik*), "and other drunkards torment us most unmercifully. They compel us every day to do public labour in Babenzy or in our village. We men are put every night on guard; and these cruel sots, the village officials, enter our homes when we are out, frighten our children, and behave in a disgraceful manner towards our wives. Late in the night of the 11th—12th December they came to my wife Xenia, and tormented her as much as they liked in the same way as is mentioned of Susanna in the Bible; but they acted worse still. Help us, O Lord! It is dreadful even to speak of it. They threw her on the floor and outraged her, first the drunken companions of the village elder and then the latter himself. They then compelled her to make the sign of the cross, and threatened, in case she did not do so, to submit her once more to the same treatment; and all the time the

poor woman was *enceinte*. They twisted her hands out of joint, wounded them, and left her half dead. They smashed all the crockery and kitchen utensils and broke all the windows. Even to the present day our house is without any windows. With tears in our eyes, we beseech you, brothers, to assist us, and let it be as soon as possible. Do not delay. They torture us so. With our eyes flooded with tears, we entreat you to plead our cause. Perhaps our heavenly Father will grant us grace and protect us."

The letter was written at the end of the year 1892, and not a hundred years ago, as one might be led to believe from its contents. In consequence of this and innumerable other outrages, Prince Hilkoff, one of Tolstoi's successors, who at the time had been banished to the Caucasus,[1] addressed a letter to Archbishop Ambrosius, in which he confirmed the contents of the above letter, and from which the following extract may be quoted:—

"YOUR GRACE,—Everybody sees with pleasure the result of your labours. . . . Your Grace can now see clearly what fruit your activity has yielded. The repeated warnings of your Grace and other similar shepherds, as you will find described in the tenth chapter of St. John, have found an echo in the hearts of the rural police of the Kieff government; it will give your Grace pleasure to hear this! The proclamations which, as ordered by you, were nailed on the walls of the churches to incite the hatred of one part of the people against the other, such writings as 'Prokljatij Stundist'"("The Accursed Stundist"),"which were distributed by your Grace with so much zeal, your sermons and those of your followers which incite to hatred and intolerance, all

[1] Although the Government would never have dared to lay hands on the person of Leo Tolstoi, it has, however, in a number of cases, arrested and banished his successors, from among the higher as well as the lower classes of society

these have had at last the desired effect. The new champions of orthodoxy have found a new method to force women to make the sign of the cross. Infamy and baseness! If an inquiry were to be made, the subordinate tools would probably be found guilty, but who incited these subordinate tools?"

Prince Hilkoff might, with just the same right, have put this question to higher quarters. Neither the rural police, the village priests, nor the bishops would have dared to commit these abominable outrages had they not known that the most intimate and all-powerful counsellor of the Tsar, Pobiedonostseff, had sanctioned their actions against the accursed Stundists. Where the government is autocratic the responsibility for such systematic misdeeds does not rest with the subordinates, but with the Government, and in the last instance with the autocrat himself.

The persecutions against the "Old Believers" and other sects more or less connected with them may be passed over without further comment, as they are of much less political importance. The "Old Believers," the Uniates, and many other sects differed from the orthodox Church only in their ceremonies and dogmas, whilst the sects previously described particularly endeavoured to maintain the rights of the individual as against the Church. From this to the maintenance of individual rights as against the temporal power is but a short step, in fact no further than that it may be taken at any moment by the Stundists and their sympathisers, as has already been the case with the Catholics in Poland and the Lutherans in the Baltic provinces.

In this respect religious persecutions go hand in hand with the attempts to Russify the people as quickly as possible by suppressing the indigenous languages. The attacks were therefore directed now against the schools, now against the churches, now against the officials, who were compelled to use the Russian tongue, when coming into contact with

the public, without troubling whether the official language was understood or not. The attack against the churches was generally made in a veiled and indirect form to prevent this intolerance from creating too great a sensation and too many protests in the civilised world. By trying to accustom the rising generation to this, and compelling the priests to use the Russian language, an endeavour was made to lay a foundation for the orthodox Church. All that was required was a petition (immaterial as to the means of obtaining it) made by a village or a district for permission to be admitted into the orthodox Church, whereupon the whole population of the district was declared to be received into its bosom, though without inquiring whether the majority had signed the petition or not. This method of making proselytes was already in vogue during the reign of Alexander III., and is still being followed in the case of Catholics and Lutherans. Wherever the rulers had, by such means, found a pretext that was useful when questions of using force against Jews or dissenters arose, they proceeded on precisely the same lines.

One of the most brutal cases of proselytising happened in the time of Alexander III., in the year 1893, at the little town of Krozhe, on the frontier of Russian Poland, where the community, although it had been announced as about to embrace the orthodox Greek Church, refused to leave its Roman Catholic church. All the admonitions of the Russian authorities remained unheeded. The community did not leave the church, in which service was regularly held. A detachment of Cossacks was then sent to drive out the disobedient congregation, and the command was carried out with such zeal that twenty Catholics were killed on the spot, over a hundred were more or less seriously wounded, and a further considerable number drowned in an adjoining river, into which the fugitives were chased by the Cossacks.

Generally speaking, however, the reaction under Alexander III. in Poland and the Baltic provinces directed its attacks partly against the local institutions of various sorts, which were simply abolished, partly against the native language, which was prohibited in the schools, in public offices, nay, even in the shops, in the streets, at meetings, etc. Those who failed to speak Russian were warned, and were, if they showed themselves recalcitrant, liable to much heavier punishment by "administrative process." In the year 1873, Apukhtin, the Chief of Education in Warsaw, went even so far as to prohibit instruction being given in Polish in the deaf-mute institution of that place! That he condemned the deaf-mutes to the impossibility of understanding each other or of making themselves understood by others was a matter beneath his consideration; it seemed to him of greater importance that they should learn to form with their fingers Russian letters and words.

Blind fanaticism and intolerance, personified by Pobiedonostseff, reigned unchecked in the schools and churches. The author of the article in the *Christian World* previously quoted concludes, not without reason, his description of the persecutions of the non-orthodox in Russia with the following words:—

"The European nations of the West do not seem to realise that they have next door to them a Power more intolerant in matters of religious liberty than Spain in its worst period, with more unprincipled and more narrow-minded persecutors of all other Dissenting creeds than were Alva and Torquemada. How could they know it? Russia works in silence; her methods are occult, and the victims are mute. There is no Press as understood by us in Russia which could publish and brand every case of persecution. Trials against heretics are held with closed doors, and publicity is carefully excluded. The Russians do not know a tenth part of what is actually occurring."

CHAPTER XI.

THE RESULTS OF THE REACTION IN ECONOMIC MATTERS.

THROUGH the emancipation of the peasants the economic circumstances in Russia had altered in a considerable degree. The freedom that the majority of the people had to earn their living in whatever way they chose, or, in other words, the enfranchised labouring force, brought entirely new conditions into economic life. How it would shape and develop itself it was impossible to foretell, for, owing to the interference of the Government, it did not find any scope for diverting this development in this or that direction. The Government, however, were endeavouring to do so, feeling as deeply convinced as ever that they understood much better than the people themselves how to promote their welfare.

Russia was, as it is in the main nowadays, an agricultural country. Nine-tenths of her population belong to the peasant class. The prosperity of the whole country is, therefore, intimately allied with that of the peasants, and the most simple principles of political economy suffice to show that it cannot be otherwise. But the Imperial Government to all appearance seemed devoid of even these rudimentary notions. The land taxes which immediately after the emancipation were imposed upon the peasant communities were, as a rule, so unduly high that only under the most favourable circumstances would the peasants have been able to pay them. These conditions can best be summed up as follows: if they had been in a position to help themselves; if they had had the

opportunity of gaining an insight into agriculture and of combining, as they had endeavoured to do in many cases, with the object of improving their position and other matters connected with farming; and if the Government had developed and enlarged agricultural industry by all available means, allowing other industries to arise in proportion as they became necessary.

The Government considered a directly opposite policy better and wiser. The very small measure of local self-government which had been granted to the people in the beginning of the reform agitation was, as stated before, more and more restricted, the peasants being placed under the guardianship of officials especially appointed by the Government, officials who were not even interested to the extent of the former ground landlords in keeping their human beasts of burden in good condition. At last on the 13th (25th) of July, 1889, a ukase was promulgated which to a certain extent chained the peasants to their home communities, though in a lesser degree than formerly. In consequence of the increasing emigration to Siberia and other parts of the Empire where land could still be had for little money, some of the landed proprietors, who were afraid of the dearness of labour, applied to the Government to prevent a further exodus. The autocratic Government, which in every instance had shown itself prone to put the interests of the classes before those of the masses, again in this case did not disappoint the landlords in their expectations. In the ukase mentioned above it was ordered that "all persons who emigrate without having previously obtained the permission of the Minister of the Interior and of the Minister of the Town Lands shall be sent back in charge of the proper authorities to the communities where they are registered."

Permission to emigrate was only granted by the said Ministers in exceptional cases, and only after the petitioners

had been kept waiting for a reply for months. In this case it was not a matter of departing from the Empire to some other country, but of moving from one part of the same to another. When the peasants, who could not understand, why after having been delivered from bondage, they should not be entitled to move with the permission and co-operation of the *mirs* in their own country, nevertheless left their home communities, where they were starving, without permission, they were brought back to their former habitations like criminals in custody. As a rule they had sold everything they possessed, and were consequently destitute after their return. On the return journey they lodged with their wives and children in the common prisons, and when they arrived home at last they or their communities were, moreover, mulcted by the Government for the travelling expenses and even for indemnification for their stay in State lodgings.

It is impossible to believe otherwise than that the Government thought to act with the best intention when it prevented the masses of poor people from going to those parts where the possibility of earning a living for people who commence with two empty pockets would be very doubtful. But in any case it is almost incredible that the Government, having granted the people only a few years ago freedom and civil rights, could not understand that by these regulations it cancelled those rights and made the freedom absolutely illusory. It is, indeed, so incomprehensible that the suspicion arises that those who actually were at the head of the Government policy—*i.e.*, the reactionary party—intended deliberately to curtail the freedom of the people and to put it back gradually into a state which in every respect would be equal to that of the serfdom era.

In any case it appears that the full and well-known intention of the Minister of the Interior, Count Dmitri Tolstoi, had been to heap favours on the nobility, who were

for the greater part ruined by the emancipation of the peasants. His endeavours to confine by ordinance the appointments of district chiefships to the nobility and thereby to restore to them the power over the peasants, has been already alluded to. Another equally desperate attempt, and equally unsuccessful, to raise the lost authority and influence of the nobility was made by the Minister of the Interior on an economical basis.

Pobiedonostseff, as well as Tolstoi, knew very well that the autocracy could not in the long run be maintained on such an artificial and ill-founded basis as the bureaucracy, but would have to seek a support in one or other class of the people in order to stand firm. The Procurator of the Holy Synod looked for this support to nationalistic orthodoxy; the Minister of the Interior put his faith in the nobility of the Empire, which he wished to change for this purpose into a class supporting the Tsardom, with special privileges and greater political rights than those enjoyed by the rest of the people. Both proved to the same extent, although in a different way, that they did not understand that the development of the Russian nation was bound to take shape on the basis of its national character. Both, therefore, tried their utmost to mislead the Tsar with regard to the measures to be adopted, induced him to join in their endeavours to prevent the logically and historically necessary course of development, and by so doing created that hopeless conflict between the Government and the nation which exists up to this day.

Pobiedonostseff did not see that the peasants, the more than ten millions of serfs, would now, as a natural consequence of their deliverance from the fetters which formerly forbade them independence in any form, have the thought or the feeling—or instinct, if you like it—which would qualify them to think independently and to choose the spiritual

and religious form of living. For this reason he did not understand that the coldness and meaninglessness which characterise the Greek orthodox Church could no longer satisfy the awakening people. He did not realise that orthodoxy, unless supported by the true feeling and conviction of the people, could not become a support for the autocracy; nor did he perceive that by keeping the nation forcibly under the dominion of the Church he shifted the centre in this way, although by a circuitous route, to the civil and military bureaucracy.

Count Tolstoi, the Minister of the Interior, again proved himself unable to understand the historical development of the relation between the people and the aristocracy, and between the latter and the Government, the Tsardom. The foundation and the strengthening of the sovereignty of the Tsar required the entire support of the nation. This had been obtained by means of granting in the course of time to an increasing number of prominent individuals all kinds of advantages, creating out of them a privileged class, who bound up their own advantages with those of the Tsardom. The more and more extended obligation to serve the nobility resulted in an increase of the rights of the privileged class, until they also included the dominion over the masses of the people. As a compensation for the obligation of the nobility to serve the State or the Tsar in civil and military matters, they had obtained the right to the labour of the peasants, and had at the same time, with the consent of the Tsar, usurped the right to dispose of the persons of the same. Peter III. abolished the liability on the nobility of service to the State, and thereby made the bondage an anomaly which had to disappear sooner or later. It lasted a hundred years before the conviction of the necessity of the abolition of the bondage had penetrated Russian society to a sufficient degree, and the repeal of the same was at last decreed.

By this means, however, the influence of the nobility as a social class came to an abrupt end. In a few years the greater part of this class had spent the sums of money which the State had paid as ransom for the land given to the peasants; the estates passed for the greater part into other hands that understood how to make more profit out of them; the nobility as such disappeared, and the development became, what under these circumstances was only inevitable, democratic. The most intelligent and most energetic representatives of the nobility no doubt joined in this movement, which was based upon quite different strata, so to speak, upon new society elements. Here was a middle class, awakened to the knowledge of its power and its rights, which fully understood that the future of Russia would have to be built upon the education of the great mass of the people, the lower and wider classes of society. This was the beginning of the conflict. Autocracy became frightened for the consequences of this development, which it had itself helped to create, and turned its power against those who had taken upon themselves to lead the movement. As the conflict became continually sharper autocracy all at once saw itself opposed by all classes of society, the entire nation. It could find no other support but the bureaucracy, the creation and dependant of autocracy, and which therefore could be no real support.

Instead of coming to the only logical conclusion that autocracy ought to become democratic and make the interests of the majority of the people its own, thus finding in the people that support which alone could secure for a long time the continuance of autocracy, Dmitri Tolstoi resolved to try to revive by artificial means a submerged class, to restore to this class its former power and influence upon affairs of the State, and thereby give to the Tsardom the much needed assistance of society. The way he went

about it cannot be better told than in the words of Stepniak.[1]

"The Russian nobility was ruined by the emancipation of the peasants because of its entire inability to reconcile itself to the new state of affairs. Before Count Tolstoi started to raise the nobility to the high station he had planned for it he resolved to re-establish its former economic powers. The idea was very good, even brilliant, and quite in accordance with modern scientific theories.

"Our time has been so deeply impressed by the economic philosophy founded by Karl Marx that it appears almost comical that men who detest his name, and who have certainly not read any of his works, at times show a real comprehension of his views. Count Tolstoi was such a man. He was sufficiently acquainted with modern social science to understand that all attempts to raise the nobility to a prominent position in politics would come to nothing if he were not able to improve its economical position. If he had been a little better acquainted with national economy he would have discovered that he was on the point of mounting "a dead horse." The functions of the society class in the historical arena are changed in such an organic manner that it is just as impossible to bring life into that class in the struggle for existence as it would be to repopulate the earth with antediluvian animals. But Count Tolstoi was a statesman of the old school; he believed that Tsardom was all-powerful. The nobility lost ground, and in consequence of its lack of means threatened to disappear as a land-owning power of society very shortly. He therefore came to the prompt conclusion that the State had only to lend money to the nobility without any reservation to restore it to its

[1] In "King Stork and King Log," pp. 84, 85. The continuation is also founded upon Stepniak's description, which is derived from official statements and data, as can be verified.

former position. The foundation of a special bank in 1886 for this purpose opened up at that period what is known in Russia under the name of 'the era of the nobility.'"

From the very commencement of its activity the Bank of Nobility showed an extraordinary liberality. Noble landlords requiring loans were allowed to value their estates themselves without the bank doing anything else but reduce the value a little in rare cases. A veritable run on the bank was made by noblemen in want of money, the capital being found by the Government, that is, by the mass of the people. In the first year of its existence the bank granted loans, on terms as stated above, to the amount of sixty-eight and a half millions of roubles, and in the following year seventy-one millions.

The consequences of this way of doing business were soon apparent. On the date of the first payment of interest in the second year of business nearly all the debtors failed to pay, and after the bank had been working altogether three years the unpaid interest amounted to ten and a half millions of roubles out of a sum of twelve millions due. But instead of foreclosing on the mortgaged estates, and, in accordance with its duty and obligations, claiming them as Crown lands to be handed over for "colonisation" by the people, the Government promulgated a ukase on the 12th of October, 1889, directing that the unpaid ten and a half millions were to be added as a further loan to the capital already advanced; or, in other words, the debtors were made an additional present to the amount of this rather considerable sum. Then, however, a new course was pursued, although not that of refusing credit to the insolvent debtors. From the next balance-sheet the unpaid interest and other debts due to the bank were simply deducted, and the surplus in cash handed over to the borrowers. Sixty to seventy per cent. of the yearly loans which the Bank of Nobility

granted after this reform were such old "debt payments," but notwithstanding these the bank had by January, 1892, already paid in loans three hundred and forty millions of roubles to the penniless nobility. With regard to the present amount of all the loans the author has no details, but it is hardly possible to assume otherwise than that it has considerably increased since January, 1892.

This attempt, the great politico-economical scheme of Tolstoi, was a total failure. If, in the same period, he had spent an equally large sum to assist the peasants, that class of society which required land and was willing to cultivate it, or if he had only left the development of matters to itself, so that the nobility, extravagant and inaccessible to progress as it was, would have been compelled to sell its estates to actual farmers, the economical position of the present Russia would probably be quite a different one from what it actually is. But the peasants, the preponderating majority from which the State obtained the disproportionately larger part of its income, were generally treated by Tolstoi and the Government with a niggardliness which contrasted sharply with the liberality shown to the nobility.

One of the measures proposed shortly after the accession to the throne of Alexander III. for the improvement of the peasants was the establishment of a bank for the purpose of facilitating the acquisition of the soil by direct purchase through the granting of loans. Such a bank was actually established at the end of the year 1883, and had started its work with a capital obtained by issuing bonds bearing $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest, for which the Government had guaranteed interest up to the maximum amount of five millions of roubles per annum. In addition to this, the bank had granted a credit of half a million of roubles.

In the first year of its existence the bank granted loans to the amount of nine and a half millions of roubles to peasants,

who altogether bought 210,000 desiatines of land, to the value of eleven millions. The peasants had therefore spent nearly one and a half millions of roubles of their own capital. During the next year the bank lent fourteen millions of roubles for the purchase of 318,000 desiatines of land, to the value of sixteen and a half millions of roubles. This, however, was the highest figure ever attained. From this time the amount continually decreased. Six years after, the total of the loans granted only reached five and a half millions of roubles, and the area purchased by the peasants to 161,000 desiatines, whilst at the same time the amount of the purchase sum which the farmers had themselves to find was raised from 12 to 25 per cent. This signified nothing else than that the bank claimed the right to demand more than 25 per cent. of capital expenditure by the peasants themselves—the maximum allowed by the regulations of the bank—or, in other words, the peasants were compelled to borrow extra capital from other lenders. The peasants were, moreover, unable to obtain loans from other but usurers, and the interest charged by these averaged, in the country, 35 per cent.

The bank, established for the purpose of facilitating the purchase of land by the peasants, lost all the attraction of novelty to the bureaucracy. Instead of supporting the same, as should have been its special mission, it was allowed to become within a few years a financial institution of an ordinary kind, the main object of the administration being to risk as little as possible and to earn as much money as possible. During the years in which the concern was managed with judgment and for the benefit of the peasants it was most useful, though its proportionately limited means (during the ten years of its existence this bank spent altogether seven millions of roubles less than the Bank of Nobility in the first year of its activity) prevented it from being a great

success. With a peasant population of seventy millions, the number of which increased by 1 per cent. per annum, the land area of the peasants ought to have increased by two million desiatines per annum to allow the same share as before to every individual, *i.e.*, more than six times as much as the Agricultural Bank had assisted the peasants to buy in the best years. The uncontrolled influence of the bureaucracy had the same destructive effect upon this enterprise as upon all other institutions established for the improvement of the lot of the people.

The result of the system to which the peasants were subjected was soon noticeable in the amount of unpaid rates, which commenced to increase year by year in one province after the other. In the year 1871 an Imperial commission, which had been appointed to collect statistical material regarding the people, had already with regard to rates, etc., established the curious fact that the Russian peasant generally paid say 45 per cent. of all his income in rates to the State, or in other words, that nearly half of his labour was required for the purpose of rates. But even this had not had the effect of proving to the rulers that it was absolutely necessary to introduce reforms in this direction if the great majority of the people were not to be hopelessly ruined. They did not see that the great agricultural mass of the people would in the long run not be able to pay half of their more than scanty income to the State; that a smaller harvest of not more than the usual fluctuation downward, such as will happen in any part of the world, must be ruinous to men to whom even under normal conditions little enough was left of their labour for a livelihood.

Still no reforms were introduced. There was, on the contrary, an endeavour made to extort by repeatedly increased Customs still more impositions from the people, for articles of necessity were taxed in this way as mercilessly as articles of

luxury. At the end of the 'eighties the amount of the rates in arrear began to reach an alarming figure. The situation was, moreover, most acute in the most fertile parts of Russia, that is to say, in those parts where the landlords had found it unprofitable to turn over the lands to the peasants, and had not, for this reason, insisted upon the paying off of the minimum provided by the law of emancipation until they were forced to do so by a new ukase. In the province of Samara the rates in arrear amounted to one million roubles in the year 1889. In the following year it amounted to two millions. In the province of Kasan there was also a deficit of two million roubles in 1890, in Nijni Novgorod nearly two millions, in Simbirsk over half a million, and so on. Everywhere one saw the same result of insane management, the same symptoms of an economic disease in the State which was nearing a crisis.

But all this did not tend to warn the rulers. Instead of trying to get at once at the root of the evil by reorganising the system of taxation and landownership, the Government tried with unrelenting severity to compel the impoverished peasants to pay their taxes. Distraint and compulsory sales were so frequent that horses and cattle, the only personal property of the peasants, became nearly unsaleable, and flogging was applied to a great extent to compel the peasants to pay; but soon even these measures did not prove effective. Those who were at all afraid of flogging had spent their last kopeck; the others allowed themselves to be flogged, because the pain was only transient, rather than be condemned to famine by being deprived of their last means.

In 1891 the smash came. In the whole of the Volga district the harvest was a failure. Within six weeks of the harvest the people in the provinces of Kasan, Samara, and others were feeding on acorns, bark, and straw bread. Thirty-four million people were in need of necessary

cereals for support during the winter. As long ago as July, 1890, when it became evident that a bad harvest was to be expected, the *zemstvo* assemblies in Saratoff, Samara, Nijni Novgorod, and Kasan had addressed to the Minister of the Interior a detailed report of the state of affairs, with the request to grant greater assistance, so as to save the population from the worst consequences of the failure of the crop. As a reply to this petition the Government sent to this district a special envoy, General Vischniakoff, who was to examine the statements of the *zemstvo* assemblies and see whether they were true or not. The General fulfilled the expectations of the rulers by reporting that there existed no famine, and that therefore no assistance was required.

The principal endeavour of the Government hereafter consisted in silencing all those who tried to make known the circumstances of the district afflicted by the bad harvest. The newspapers were prohibited from publishing any statements about the increasing misery in the Volga district; while the journals friendly to the Government, the *Moskowskia Viedomosti*, now the organ of Pobiedonostseff, at their head, declared the "famine" to be an invention of the liberals for the purpose of bringing the Government into discredit, and the official gazette published a reassuring article about the state of affairs in the affected governments. For a time it really appeared as if it would be possible to bury the famine in silence, and with it many millions of men, if nothing were done to protect them from starving. The Press was not allowed to publish a single word about this.

But there was still in Russia a man whose voice could not be gagged, because the rulers did not dare to lay hands on his person; who therefore spoke when others were mute. In an article that was echoed throughout the world, Leo Tolstoi described the real state of affairs, and showed that

more than ten million men did not know where to find bread during the long interval before the next harvest. He called upon the Government to state at once whether there was sufficient corn in the whole of the Empire to feed the population until the following year, and, if this should not be the case, to procure the shortage from elsewhere.

The Government was compelled to reply. It promulgated a ukase by which all export of corn from Russia was prohibited, and published a statement to the effect that the available stocks in the Empire were sufficient to maintain the population until the next harvest.

The Government, or rather the Minister of Finance, Vischnegradsky, who had issued this proclamation, withheld, however, the fact that the stocks of corn were by no means in the hands of the population affected by this bad harvest, but rather in those of the corn dealers, and that it would require a round sum of four hundred million roubles to transport these stocks from the warehouses of the latter to the dwellings of the former. At the outset the Government provided twelve millions from the Imperial charity funds and declared that this was the utmost that could be granted. It was a ridiculously insufficient sum, considering the way these sums are handled in Russia—especially by Government officials holding various titles and honours, but all possessing wide-open pockets—so that only a part of the charity funds reached the hands of the needy. Thirty-four millions of starving men could only be appeased for a few days with the share to which they were entitled. The Government as well as anybody else knew that these thirty-four million men, who had nothing more to lose on earth, would become a real danger; it therefore increased the twelve millions to one hundred and twenty, in spite of its distinct declaration that it was unable to give any more.

But even this was only sufficient, to use the expression of

Stepniak, to feed one out of three starving men. Private charity had therefore to step in, and it was more than ready to do this. The Government, however, was not at all disposed to allow everybody to communicate at will with the sufferers, who could easily get a notion that others could do more than the Government of the Tsar; the occasion might even be used for direct political propagandism on the part of any voluntary helper. The Government therefore demanded that all sums privately collected should be handed over to the official relief committee for distribution, under the chairmanship of the heir apparent, the present Tsar, and composed of Ministers and other high dignitaries.

A committee thus constituted would, it was thought, inspire the public with sufficient confidence to set aside the wish of private persons and unions to distribute the funds collected to the needy themselves. But this was a mistake. It is a significant fact, showing the degree of confidence placed in the Government of Russia and in all that is dependent on it, that even people attached to the court advised the representative of the Quakers in Pennsylvania, who had sent a considerable sum of money to assist the Russian sufferers, not to hand over these funds to the committee presided over by the heir apparent. The Charity Organisation Society of Moscow, which had several millions at its disposal, sent a deputation to the Minister of Finance with the request to be allowed to distribute the funds themselves and independently of the committee of the heir apparent and Government officials. Vischnegradsky did not reply in the negative, but went so far as to threaten to arrest everybody who should attempt to dispense charity in the country without his permission.

This was too much even for indulgent Russian society. Without any previous arrangement, and impelled only by a general feeling of revolt against the Government and its

unreasonable, nay criminal, prohibition of private individuals from assisting those whom the Government itself could not help, the citizens of all classes throughout Russia simply made light of the interdict, and travelled to the districts affected by the famine for the purpose of alleviating it as far as was in their power. The Government was obliged to give in, although it had not the tact to do this without a murmur. On the 12th December, 1890, a circular was sent to all the officials of various degrees and classes ordering them to put no obstacles in the way of private benevolence. Anything more monstrous than the necessity of such an order from the Government can hardly be conceived.

Since then famine has become almost chronic in Russia, inasmuch as it appears every year in some part of the Empire of the Tsar. This remarkable fact was decidedly one of the most important motives that induced the thinking Russians of various standing in society to seek the origin of such a state of affairs. These inquiries produced at times quite curious results. At the outset it was stated that the great famine of 1890–91 was not the result of the failure of the harvest, but of a diminution of the crop, a shortage which amounted to one-fifth of an average yield, or not more than an instance of the uncertainty of agricultural business, which in other countries of Europe had onlv produced severe privations, but in no instance had led to a famine. The reason why such evil consequences had ensued in Russia was easily found. It consisted in the general impoverishment of the people, who, notwithstanding all their labour and all their privations, could never acquire sufficient means to try to better their position. The peasants could neither buy cattle for ploughing nor tools and other appurtenances to enable them properly to work the land, of which the productiveness was in consequence so small that the "fourth grain" (3·9) was not even considered a medium crop, that is

to say, so small that in such circumstances it had become futile to attempt to carry on agricultural labour. A diminution of this bad output by one-fifth would to all appearances have produced famine and misery throughout. The only remedy left to the peasants, in the event of the crop turning out a failure, in order to escape famine, was to sell their animals and household goods. In the following year there remained no other course open to those who could no longer obtain an advance from the village bankers or usurers to buy fresh animals for the plough, or were themselves not strong enough to draw plough and harrow, but to abandon hearth and home.

The usurers have become a positive curse in Russia. Under the protection of the rural police, and often in league with them, these village bankers (*kulakes*) plunder the people in the whole country systematically. The individual who gets into their clutches will hardly be able to extricate himself from them. He must be content if he succeeds in paying the interest on his debt, to prevent an increase of the latter, lest not only his house and fields, his implements and animals, but he and his family, gradually become the property of the *kulake*. It sounds like a fairy tale, but it is nevertheless true, that in the Russia of to-day parents among the people, when famine threatens, sell themselves and their children for a few or more years as serfs. With regard to the sons, contracts are made with innkeepers and masters for a period of apprenticeship, which, as a rule, is considered tantamount to several years of serfdom. The daughters often go into the towns and manufacturing places, to meet perhaps a worse fate. The parents also bind themselves to the *kulakes* under conditions which actually turn them into slaves until the debt has been paid. The statistician Slominsky reckons that the peasant works four out of the six days for the State and the usurer, whilst for

himself and his family he must be satisfied with the earnings of the remaining two days. How and when could he have the opportunity to save any money for the improvement of his farm? This was, indeed, made still more difficult by the Protectionist policy which the Government continued to pursue more and more, with the object that Russia should become an industrial country. Her manifold products, so it was calculated, would suffice to meet all her requirements. By exploiting the same thousands upon thousands of individuals would find employment and earn wages who at present had no work to do. The United States had proved that a protective tariff had given rise to great industry in that country where previously there was none. Russia should, therefore, follow this example, and open to the people fresh industries and sources of wealth. So protective duties became the order of the day.

The American example was closely followed; but the fact was overlooked that in the United States a quite different state of society prevailed, and consequently quite different circumstances, with a necessary variance in the conditions for economic development. In America, as a result of full and unlimited civil initiative, the sources of income, the national revenue, and the consuming power of the mass of the population were developing so strongly that not even Protection could in any way put a barrier to them. The people had become prosperous notwithstanding the tariffs, which proved that Protection could actually produce a number of industries. In Russia, on the other hand, the purchasing capacity of the people was constantly decreasing. It was in this direction that reforms should first have been introduced, which would have put the existence of the people in general on a sound economic basis, and enabled them to sustain the still heavier taxation which was a consequence of the rise in price of all manufactured goods through

the high protective duties. This was entirely overlooked by those who had dreams of making Russia an industrial country. A system of Protection, more complete and stringent than that of America, was introduced within a short time, and a number of industrial firms became rich with incredible rapidity, whilst the majority of the people sank with equal expedition into the direst poverty. For there was no question of exporting the products of the new industry, and just as little of competing with the old industrial countries of Europe. The home consumers were the only ones that could be compelled to contribute to the industrial revival, even down to the very poorest, for the simple reason that they could not absolutely dispense with factory products. Even such articles of necessity as candles, soap, simple cotton goods, were so thoroughly protected that the prices of the same were doubled, whilst those of the indispensable implements—scythes, ploughs, working tools, etc.—rose threefold.

Nevertheless, the export of Russian corn did not decrease at all. The peasants had to sell in order to be able to pay the taxes of the State, which knew no mercy, but had ordered flogging on an extensive scale for all those who tried to escape the pangs of hunger by keeping for themselves a part of the corn to which the Government was entitled. The statistics—that is to say, those that were made public—proved that the export of corn was on the increase, but it did not show that the consumption of straw, bark, and acorns as human food was increasing considerably more than the corn exported out of the dominions of the *moujik* Emperor.

Neither did the Government approve of the publication of other statistical figures, which would have convinced every thinking person of the same appalling truth, as shown by the statistics relating to the bread made from bark, that the misery among the people had assumed frightful proportions

before it had become one long-continued famine. This dreadful situation is best illustrated by the rate of mortality, which, varying in the different provinces, reached its climax in Russia at the beginning of the nineties, being the highest average of any European country, namely, 37·3 per thousand. In some provinces, however, the rate was considerably larger, as, for instance, in Orel, 46·7 per thousand inhabitants, or more than double the average of London, in Nijni Novgorod 46·5, in Samara 44·6 and so forth.

It is a dreadful summary of misery, hunger, want, filth, and sickness that these dry figures represent; at the same time, they supply the most indisputable proof of the incapability of the Russian Government system, as it had become under Alexander III., to carry out even the most reasonable demands of the people. But the rulers did not see and would not understand where the fault lay, although the peasants concerned were enabled to appreciate the situation by noting that in those very provinces of the "black earth" belt, where the soil was most fertile, the arrears of rates increased every year. No better way of judging the economic state of the peasants can be imagined than this: that the rate collectors had to demand what was the Emperor's own, stick and knout in hand. In those parts the population has from time immemorial devoted itself entirely to agriculture, without going in for those home industries which in many other parts of Russia are a larger source of income to the population than the tilling of the soil itself, and whereby they are made less dependent on agriculture.

Before the end of the reign of Alexander III. all the provinces in the richest agricultural districts of Russia were hopelessly in arrears with their rates. In Samara these arrears amounted to eleven and a quarter millions, in Kasan seven millions and nine-tenths, in the provinces of Nijni Novgorod and Saratov almost two, in Simbirsk, Voronesch, and

Tambov, more than one million each. Since then many more provinces have been added to this list which owe more than one million in rates. Everywhere these amounts have increased in the same ratio as they increased throughout the reign of Alexander III., and all the while neither Tsar nor Ministers have thought of changing the regime under which all this misery was created and had developed. They squandered hundreds of millions on the comparatively few individuals who formed the class of nobility, but allowed thousands to perish from hunger and the diseases which accompany it. They closed their eyes to the rapacity, the bribery, and the robbery of the countless officials, while at the same time they prevented citizens of various classes and degrees of education from looking after their own business. They persecuted in the name of religion and Christian charity all who would not submit to the ceremonies of their religion as ordained by them. They restricted to a great extent the opportunities for the acquisition of education and knowledge by the great majority of the people,[1] and did their best to suppress those non-Russian nationalities which were under the sceptre of the Tsar. In a word, they did all to make the Tsardom and autocracy hated and detested, to undermine the despotic bureaucratism in which the autocracy had been merged, whilst they thought that this sovereign autocracy had been established for ever.

[1] In 1887 a ukase was promulgated ordering directors of "gymnasia" not to allow the children of small business men, mechanics in general, or small tradesmen, to enter their schools, although their parents were willing and able to pay the fees.

CHAPTER XII.

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT UNDER ALEXANDER III.

AT the end of 1879 the revolutionary party underwent a remarkable phase; for it divided itself into two groups, into socialists and revolutionaries. The former wished to continue the friendly propaganda, the purely socialistic agitation among the people, notwithstanding the disproportionate sacrifices they had already made. The latter, on the other hand, asserted, and this with good reason, that the results obtained by the propaganda were not in any way in proportion to the sacrifices; they therefore pressed for the application of violence, the same as that which the terrorists, who at that time were not so well organised as later on, had already commenced to apply. From this group, which included most of the revolutionaries, the executive committee was chosen to take over the leadership of the party.

The application of violent means was, however, neither the only nor even the most important feature in which this party was distinguished from the socialists. Their leaders and members had in their fight against the forces of the Government gradually come to the conclusion that no progress was possible so long as the autocracy arbitrarily prohibited the discussion of all opinions which did not agree with its own. They therefore insisted that, without sacrificing their socialistic ideas, the first aim of the fight against autocracy should be political freedom. Only after attaining this object would the time arrive to think about carrying on a socialistic propaganda. The organ of the party was the paper

Narodnaia Volia (the *Will of the People*), which was printed for years in secret printing works in different parts of Russia, and it was this group which, under the leadership of the executive committee, stood behind all Nihilistic attempts and conspiracies. To show its evolution it will be well to quote Stepniak, who can speak with greater authority than anyone else about it:

"When the Narodnaia Volia party proclaimed political revolution as its immediate goal, it did not give up socialism. But it was compelled to free itself from the least tincture of anarchism which was perhaps still clinging to it. When once the necessity of the fight for political freedom was recognised, the question naturally followed how to obtain in future the greatest advantages from representative institutions, *i.e.*, how they could at the same time be used as a means to obtain reforms and as a protection for a preparatory propaganda. In this way, and in consequence of the position they had taken up, the Russian anarchists changed into social democrats. The programme which the *Narodnaia Volia* published in 1880, therefore, a year after the separation, proves the quick and radical change. It is especially a political reform programme, the main points of which are—

"1. A permanent representative assembly, which is to have the principal direction and management of all affairs of the State.

"2. Self-government for all provinces and security through the election of all public officials.

"3. Independence of the village communities (*mirs*) as economic and administrative unities.

"4. Complete freedom in connection with conscience, speech, press, meeting, and election, also freedom in electioneering.

"5. Universal suffrage.

"6. Substituting a territorial militia for the standing army.

"7. Nationalisation of the soil (the soil to become the property of the State).

"8. Measures for the purpose of transferring to workmen the right of proprietorship of factories."

The six first points form the political, the two last the economical, programme of the party, which clearly proves that they were social democrats, and taking in essentials the same stand as the social democrats of other countries, with this difference; that the Russians, as members of an agricultural nation, laid greater stress upon the question of the soil. The originators of this programme recognised, at the same time, that the Russian workmen had not advanced sufficiently to become at once collective proprietors of factories and industrial establishments. They distinctly claimed, however, that the peasants were quite able to carry through the nationalisation of landed property, in which they were possibly right. The Russian peasants have, from time immemorial, been used to communism with regard to the rights of landed property.

For the actual work of carrying out this programme in a peaceful way the revolutionaries had no opportunity for some time. The executive committee employed all the forces and means of the party to attain its nearest object, *i.e.* the removal of the Tsar, whom it considered the principal and main obstacle to political freedom that was, according to the revolutionaries, the main point of any further development. It is a singular phenomenon, not to be observed in the political history of any other country, that a party whose political programme cannot be considered more than liberal, whilst its economic proposals were only peacefully social democratic, should have been driven to support its essentially mild measures by the most sanguinary revolutionary means imaginable. Under any other form of government this would be inexplicable; but

under that which existed in Russia it formed an irrefutable proof of the impossibility of reconciling the bureaucratic despotism, based on autocracy, with a development of the most elementary human and civil rights of the population.

The successful bomb outrage on Alexander II. became, as has already been stated, the turning-point in the development of the revolutionary movement. Up to that time, and during the period that followed, the executive committee had had certain reasons to become familiar with the thought that the revolution would soon break out. Terrorism had moved Russian society to such an extent that anything might be expected of it. The liberals did their utmost to gain an advantage for the nation from this movement; everywhere (not only in revolutionary circles) hopes were entertained of the return of that measure of liberalism which had marked the reform period at the beginning of the reign of Alexander II. The Government manifesto of his son, drawn up by Pobiedonostseff, put an end to all these hopes, and brought about the necessity for the revolutionary opposition to conduct its further activity on an entirely different basis.

The most progressive group, next to the executive committee, could naturally not feel all at once convinced of the impossibility of a revolution, the less so as the executive committee had shortly before by no means restricted itself to supporting and preparing attempts on the person of the Tsar, but had, at the same time, been organising in view of an outbreak. This work was now continued, its chief aim being to gain adherents and supporters of revolutionary ideas in the army. With regard to this part of the movement and the activity of the advanced group, it will be best verbally to repeat what Stepniak, the incomparable and best-informed authority in this matter, has to say about

it. In his book "King Stork and King Log," he says (in Part II., pp. 120 *et seq.*) as follows:

"The constructive work of the Nihilists" (in contrast with the attemptive or destructive work) "consisted in their endeavour to gain advantage from a period of general unrest, to organise a corps of conspirators sufficiently strong to essay an open military rising. This part of the activity of the Nihilists is little known and appreciated, because they did not succeed in gaining thereby a practical result. They had, however, overcome considerable difficulties. The years 1881–82 mark the narrowest margin that separated the Russian revolution from a real rising, similar to the one of the Dekabrists in 1825. From and with the year 1880 revolutionary ideas began to make quick progress in the army, especially amongst the garrison of St. Petersburg, and the navy at Kronstadt. Under the leadership of patriotically-minded officers, such as Lieutenant Pufanoff and Baron Stromberg at Kronstadt and Captains Pohitonoff and Rogatscheff at St. Petersburg, an important secret organisation was founded. About twenty officers of all arms and different ranks joined the conspiracy, which soon had branches over the whole of the Empire. Men who were most highly respected, and with brilliant careers behind them, joined it, such as Colonel Michael Aschanbrenner, Captains Pohitonoff, Stromberg (already mentioned), and others, some of them commanders of bodies of troops. At the same time, the soldiers were influenced by socialistically-minded workmen, who spread propagandism amongst them. In an important body of troops, which I will not name, but which was in the possession of guns, it happened that the two rival revolutionary organisations of the Narodnaia Volia and the Tschorny Peredial (the purely socialistic group), met whilst at work without knowing it, the first being amongst the officers, the

latter under the men. Both had so much success that, after some time, the two streams met. One morning, when one of the officers entered the barracks unexpectedly, he saw that the soldiers were engaged in reading a paper which on his entering they tried to conceal under the table. He was curious, and ordered them to hand over the paper. It was a number of the *Tschorny Peredial.* He said nothing, but took the paper with him to communicate his discovery to his comrades. The soldiers believed themselves absolutely lost. Their joy was therefore great when, a few days afterwards, they were informed by friends in the Tschorny Peredial group that they had nothing to fear, as the officers had made common cause with their brothers. The result was a deputation of the men, who respectfully informed their officers that they were quite ready to appear at any moment with their guns before the palace, and to change the latter within a quarter of an hour into a heap of ruins.

"In several others of the different divisions the revolutionary movement was so strong as to leave hardly a doubt but that the whole body would rise at the decided moment. The military organisation had its own central committee, independent in all its inner matters, though the military conspirators had all bound themselves by a solemn oath that they would rise at the command of the executive committee, take up arms, and appear at the appointed place with as many of their people as they could bring together.

"One single word would have sufficed to create a military rising; but this word was never uttered, and no action took place.

"The revolutionary spirit spread so rapidly among the army, that the central committee hoped to strike a heavy blow and to make the rising successful. The revolution was postponed from week to week, month to month, until the Government got wind of the scheme. The leaders of the

military conspiracy in St. Petersburg were arrested, sympathisers with its cause fell into the hands of the Government, and thus all activity was stopped.

"Nobody is to blame for this fatal hesitancy. There is a great deal of responsibility attached to deciding upon a prompt rising which, though it may serve as example, is condemned in advance to failure; whilst a short delay offers a more probable chance of success. Conspiracies are like games of chance, in which the best calculations are as nought compared with the whimsey called luck.

"The years 1882–83 show a number of attempts to join again the broken threads of conspiracy. But misfortune followed misfortune in rapid succession. Throughout the Empire about two hundred and fifty to three hundred officers of all arms were arrested, of whom a third belonged to the garrisons of St. Petersburg and Cronstadt. The majority was composed of young officers of the three lowest degrees. But amongst them were two colonels, two majors, and twenty captains and staff-captains.

"The military organisation was so thoroughly destroyed that the committee was not able to muster a force sufficient to make a serious demonstration.

"In 1884 and the following years active Nihilism underwent the most critical period of its existence. Conspiracies followed upon one another uninterruptedly, but were so weak that they never led to a real attempt. Only on one occasion, in March, 1887, could the conspirators reach the streets. The revolution had in reality entered upon a new phase."

It looked as if the terrorist movement were no longer conducted so slily and cautiously after the principal leaders of their group had been hanged or exiled. The terrorists got into a number of difficulties, sufficient to shatter the hopes and will-power of even the most energetic of the revolutionists. In the autumn of 1884 a dynamite factory founded

by the terrorists at Lugansky, in the Don district, was discovered, and in 1886 a similar discovery was made in the same neighbourhood. In 1887 an attempt was made to assassinate Alexander III. by means of bombs on the anniversary of his father's death, on which day the Tsar always visited the cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul, where the Tsars of Russia lie buried, for the purpose of hearing a mass for the dead. The bombs were made in the shape of a book, so that they could be carried under the arm, but they had been faultily constructed, with the result that they did not explode at the desired moment.

In order to work undisturbed and have always at hand the required material, the terroristic chemists settled in Zurich, where they nearly succeeded in manufacturing ideal bombs, seeing that they were able to reduce them to the size of a watch without in any way diminishing their deadly effect. But on experimenting with these ideal bombs an explosion took place, which killed the inventor, Brinstein (Bemba), and seriously wounded his assistant. Several of those who had taken part in the work were arrested and so close a watch was kept that the remainder thought it more advisable to transfer the factory to Paris. But the invention itself was not lost, and when fresh bombs of the same kind had been manufactured they were conveyed by a girl, Sophia Gunsberg by name, to Russia. This girl was to smuggle them to the terrorists who had undertaken to carry out the attempt at assassination. On reaching the frontier, however, she was arrested (whether on the denunciation of the French police or not could not be ascertained, though probably so), and, in order to convince the Russian Government of their devotion, the French authorities caused as many conspirators to be arrested as they could lay hands on.[1]

[1] The same procedure was followed by the French courts before which the trial of the accused took place. Several of them had had nothing to do

The difficulty of smuggling dynamite and bombs across the frontier induced the terrorists to revive the manufacture of dynamite in Russia, which was done by one of them, a certain Manzevitsch, in the year 1891. His factory experienced the same fate as many other similar factories: it was discovered and confiscated. He himself was arrested and by "administrative process" incarcerated for life in the Schusselburg.

"But the seed of dynamite," says Stepniak, "seems to have taken root in the soil, for its deadly fruit keeps on constantly appearing on the surface. The dynamite factories cannot be extirpated, and over and over again the police discover fresh attempts to use the prepared material. The attempt to blow up the Tsar during the military manœuvres in Smolensk in 1895 seems to have been more serious than the one on the 13th March, 1887. The new number of the *Narodnaia Volia* which came out in 1893 gladly welcomed this fresh spirit of revenge and retaliation; the spectre of terrorism had again made its appearance."

In the meantime all the attempts of the terrorists did not fail completely, although the Tsar himself succeeded in eluding the attempts made on his life. Several spies of the secret police were killed by way of revenge by the revolutionaries, for example, Prim, who in 1882 was murdered in the Smolensk cemetery at St. Petersburg, likewise a number of officials who had distinguished themselves by their brutal treatment, etc., of political prisoners. The most remarkable "execution" was that of General Strialnikoff in Odessa on the 31st March, 1882. By the command and with special authority of the Tsar, this general was sent to the

with the manufacturing of the bombs, but were, nevertheless, condemned to several years of imprisonment for conspiring against the Tsar. Neither in the indictment, nor during the trial, nor in the judgment was anything mentioned about this. A Russian police official acted as a kind of prompter in this comedy, and the French authorities carried out his instructions.

south of Russia to suppress the revolutionary movement. He carried out his instructions in a quite novel method. He ordered the simultaneous arrest, in a number of South Russian towns, of several hundred persons, young people for the most part, and even schoolboys, who belonged to families considered as "untrustworthy." After a period of stringent solitary confinement the arrested persons were submitted to a sharp examination by the General himself, which always began with the statement that they were accused of crimes and criminal associations; that he would expel them for a long time to Siberia unless they made themselves worthy of the clemency and forbearance of the Government by absolute frankness.

Thereupon a great number of questions were put to them about their acquaintances and those of their families and their occupation, as to opinions which they had heard expressed, about books and articles which they had seen at home or at other people's houses, and so forth. In many instances the young prisoners, who had broken down owing to the severe solitary confinement, allowed themselves to be intimidated, and communicated a number of incidents, inoffensive in their opinion, which were then worked up by the General and his hirelings against individuals. The latter for the most part had never had the slightest connection with "unreliable" persons, but were nevertheless arrested on evidence of this kind, and by "administrative process" transported to the interior Russian provinces or to Siberia.

By the order of Strialnikoff, in Odessa alone 118 persons were arrested against whom no accusation had been raised or could be raised within three days, and 89 persons at Kieff; while hundreds were incarcerated at Harikoff, Nikolaieff, Pultava, Kursk, etc., in most instances without any reason whatever.

This was done to strike as much terror as possible into

society in general with a view to more easily entrapping those persons who dealt openly with politics. The method once again produced the opposite effect. It provoked the bitterness of the revolutionaries to such a degree that the executive committee condemned Strialnikoff to death. The sentence was carried out on the 31st March, 1882, by Schelvakoff, who waited for the General in a street through which the latter was wont to pass, and shot him dead. In order to facilitate Schelvakoff's flight, a carriage awaited him at a pre-arranged spot in the neighbourhood, driven by the same Haltarin who had caused the explosion at the Winter Palace. But Schelvakoff was so closely pursued that he could not find his way to the waiting carriage and had to take a side turning, while Haltarin left his vehicle and rushed to the aid of his pursued friend. Both were taken prisoners, brought before a court-martial, and hanged on the 4th April, 1882. Another terrorising execution, which likewise created a profound sensation, was that of the police-colonel Sudeikin, in the year 1883, also by order of the executive committee.

The loss of human lives on the part of the revolutionaries was, however, considerably greater during these and the following years. The number of persons who were banished to Siberia or who were interned in Russian prisons amounted to more than a thousand, whilst dozens were more or less summarily executed or committed suicide in order to escape the mental and physical agonies of the prisons and places of banishment. The terror of the Government, the "white terror," claimed a great many more victims at the time of Alexander III. than did the "black terror" of the Nihilists. The method of intimidation was the sole means in which the rulers had faith, and was used indiscriminately against the Nihilists as well as against individuals whose views were antagonistic to the Government, no account being

taken as to whether such views were expressed by deeds or in words only. The system was, of course, applied with the uttermost disregard in the case of political opponents. Indeed, no leniency whatever was shown even when the offences were of an insignificant nature. So it happened, for instance, that in 1882 a teacher named Neustroieff, who had been banished to Irkutsk, was shot because he had boxed the ears of the local governor. Two years later a political prisoner, Minakoff, met with the same fate in the Schlusselburg for a similar offence against the commander. In January, 1886, four Polish workmen were hanged in Warsaw as leaders of the "Proletariat" labour party, although no accusation had been brought against them of any implication in any revolution or conspiracy. For being members of the revolutionary party and participating in several conspiracies in these and the following years about a dozen men were executed, amongst them the officer who has been already mentioned, Baron Stromberg, and his comrade Dmitri Rogatschoff, who succeeded him in the leadership of the military conspiracy. Of the remainder who took part in this plot a portion were locked up in the Schlusselburg, but most of the others were sent to Siberia, in the same way as the majority of other political criminals; for as criminals all those were considered and treated who had come to be suspected by the police of working against the Government or having only that object in view.

Slowly and by degrees the revolutionaries came to the conclusion that they could gain nothing by conspiracies and attempts on the lives of persons; that the people were not yet ripe for a revolution; that such a movement would have to be much more carefully prepared than it had hitherto been; and that for these reasons the whole of the opposing organisation would have to be founded upon another basis, its centre of action being transferred to other spheres.

The zealous energy of the various revolutionary groups with regard to the propagation of both socialist revolutionary writings and those of a political nature must unquestionably be regarded as a consequence of this decision. About this period of the development of the revolutionary movement it is difficult to give more complete data than those supplied by Stepniak, whose literary activity made him, at least indirectly, the guiding spirit in this direction. In his book "King Stork and King Log" (Part II. pp. 139—145), speaking on the subject, he says:—

"The secret printing presses in Russia never ceased in their activity. More than twenty such establishments were discovered between the years 1883 and 1890, and all the workmen engaged in them were sent to the mines or to the Polar regions" (Siberia). "But this loss of workers did not prevent the printing presses from operating afresh. At every moment there were two or three printing establishments at work in some corner of the capital or the larger provincial towns. In 1883–84 six such printing establishments existed, two in the capital and four in the provinces. Each of these was the centre of some independent organisation, either local or general, and their output offers a clear idea of the objects of the revolutionary party.

"On perusal of their various publications one finds that their motive throughout is the desire to extend the sphere of the movement and to appeal to the whole of discontented, educated Russia. Thus, a speech of the well-known lawyer, Plevako, made public in the year 1883 by a printing establishment which was later on discovered by the police in St. Petersburg, was suppressed by the Government on account of its constitutional tendency, although it did not contain anything of a revolutionary nature. In December of the same year a number of moderate liberals drafted a declaration respecting their views and demands, merely asking for

a House of Representatives with advisory authority only. A revolutionary printing establishment undertook the risk of publishing this piece of lukewarm liberalism, and in the next number of the *Narodnaia Volia* the editor, although expressing a contrary opinion, nevertheless spoke sympathetically of the declaration as an important sign of the times.

"In the year 1884 another printing establishment, which had been founded by Sophia Sladkowa, published a manifesto of the 'Jugendliga,' which, although socialistic in its purposes, declared that it would adhere to constitutional reform and the work of spreading education as being the means of reaching its aims. Another publication expressing similar views was issued by the printing press at Harikoff, which was founded by the agrarian socialists (the party that advocated the division of the soil). It was discovered through the treachery of a certain Schkriaba, who was immediately thereafter executed by the revolutionaries on that account. The idea of a peaceful Socialistic propaganda, however, was resumed by a printing establishment in Moscow, which issued an organ entitled *The Union*, as well as a lot of socialistic pamphlets. Two printing establishments which were founded by the remnant of the Narodnaia Volia party at the two opposite extremities of the kingdom—namely, in Dorpat and Rostoff, on the Don—lay strong emphasis on this change in the policy of the revolutionary party. In the following year, 1885, the movement was more accentuated, as appears from the *Arbeiterzeitung*, which was published by the new secret printing establishment in St. Petersburg and by the Narodnaia Volia, which was compelled to erect a new printing establishment in Taganrog."

A further example illustrating the common trend of ideas may be given here. In the year 1887 the revolutionaries in Russia decided to publish a newspaper which was to be

edited in St. Petersburg, but printed in Switzerland, in order to escape the danger of discovery. The undertaking lacked success; so great a distance between the editorial staff and the printing establishment rendered that impracticable. Indeed, only two numbers, bearing the characteristic title of *Autonomy*, appeared in Geneva. The first number contained the programme of the paper and a quantity of letters from political refugees, these representing almost every side and section of this considerably dispersed political body. There is a letter from Debagory Mokrievitsch, one of the most energetic and gifted revolutionaries in the south. There are further letters from Dobrovolsky, formerly a *zemstvoist* and physician, who offered his position and bright future to the socialistic propaganda, and who, after being acquitted, had to flee abroad in order to escape being banished to Siberia. Among other contributors were the well-known Vera Sassulitsch, Axelrod, the cultured and eminent Plehanoff, who represented Russian social democracy, Professor Dragomanoff, the leader of the South Russian nationalist and socialistic movement, and the present writer. Together these names indicate a mass of "red" opinion, though a perusal of their utterances shows that they all agree as to a moderate political reform being the immediate step to be taken in order to afford the Russian people the possibility of a peaceful and organised development in the direction most suitable to their interests.

Thus far had the revolutionary movement arrived. The many different parties and groups which had endeavoured to advance it in accordance with their frequently contradictory theories, which had diverged in various directions and thus facilitated in a high degree the Government's fight against the opposition, were forced to one conclusion: that they must unite in order to obtain a certain measure of political freedom before it would be possible for them

to spread abroad their various doctrines. And this demand for political freedom they saw themselves compelled through circumstances to limit to modest dimensions, so that in reality the claims of the revolutionaries did not go any farther than those of the moderate liberals. In this fact lay the great significance of the turning of the revolutionary groups towards the right. It contained a possibility and a guarantee for the future co-operation of all liberal elements in Russia towards an unified, determined opposition.

Further than this, there neither was nor could hardly be a question of any organisation of the opposition. The different groups continued, as formerly, to disseminate their opinions. While so doing they emphasised the necessity of pure political reforms as a first indispensable condition for progress in other spheres, and prepared thereby the ground for the opposition, which year after year became more general, and always penetrated deeper into the layers of Russian society. At the same time the general conception and verdict concerning the revolutionary movement changed also in a remarkable degree, so that it no longer could be designated as an isolated phenomenon founded on views imported from outside and shaped according to foreign models, but as a logical and natural outcome of the blind reactionary regime, whose excesses one could and should regret without in any way condemning its existence and purpose. The revolutionaries obtained a valuable and pliable material for working up the opposition spirit from the constantly increasing hordes of industrial workmen, recruited as a rule from the peasant classes. The high protective duties induced Russian and foreign capitalists to invest largely in industrial undertakings, which could easily command among the impoverished people human labour at almost any price and on any condition. From among this

host of labourers, who had been driven by circumstances to the conclusion that it was only by joining forces that their common interests could be promoted, the revolutionaries had no difficulty in obtaining a great number of followers, especially for the socialistic doctrines. Here again, as always and everywhere, the reaction gave proof of the impossibility of any progress whatsoever under an absolute bureaucracy. Strikes against employers, although completely peaceful in their nature and duration, were treated as riots. Meetings of workmen for merely practical and economic purposes were considered as transgressions of the prohibition against unions and meetings without consent from the authorities. The organisers of such unions, likewise orators at mass meetings, etc., were subjected to the same treatment as "political criminals" of another class; that is to say, they were arrested and without inquiry and sentence banished or even hanged, since, in the eyes of the police, their active guidance had attained a high degree of "danger." Such was the case with the leaders of the "Proletariat" labour party, already referred to.

Repression of this kind repeatedly applied by the Government had naturally the sole effect of rousing the alert revolutionary propaganda to greater activity among the millions of workers in the new and steadily increasing industrial districts. These last were situated for the greater part in the western and south-western provinces, where the population —Poles, Little Russians, and Jews—had previously been largely dissatisfied with the prevailing circumstances; hence the propaganda inimical to the Government found excellent conditions for expansion, even outside the actual circle of workmen. From these industrial centres the spirit of opposition spread over the land, where those workmen who had imbibed the progressive opinions of the revolutionaries communicated them to the peasants, with the result that

these also began to express their dissatisfaction. It was by no means mere chance that made the provinces of Harikoff, Pultava, and others in the same neighbourhood the scene of the first peasant revolts in modern times, but rather the fact of the inhabitants of these regions coming into contact with centres of workers imbued with revolutionary opinions.

Neither should one overlook the importance of the awakening in moderate liberal circles, which had begun in the time of Alexander III., and even in those days asserted itself by open criticism and opposition to the Government; that is to say, opposition without the slightest revolutionary tinge, for surely one cannot describe as such the demands of rights for the people to participate, through elected representatives with at least advisory power, in the government of the country. One of the most remarkable testimonies of this awakening is in the form of a letter from an elderly Russian lady, who, though of literary tastes, had never taken part in politics, and had always been opposed to all revolutionary methods and means. This letter was addressed to Alexander III. in the year 1890. In order to be sure that her words should reach the Tsar, Madame Tsebrikoff travelled abroad, and thence despatched to him her open letter, whilst at the same time she handed it over to the European press for publication. From this letter the following extract, according to Herbert M. Thompson's "Russian Politics," may be cited here for the characteristic tenor of its contents:—

"The *zemstvo* assemblies asked for liberty of speech and abolition of administrative banishment, for public legal procedure, safety of the individual, and the right to assemble for the purpose of discussing any general need. Even if the *zemstvo* assemblies submit at present to the utmost restriction of their rights, this in no way constitutes a guarantee that coming generations, brought up in the suppressed

discontent of their forefathers, will submit to a similar slavery. The power of resistance gathers slowly during several generations, and breaks out at last. . . . Bloodshed, on whatever side it may occur, seems to me horrible; but when the shedding of blood is recompensed on one side with a decoration and with a hangman's rope on the other, then it is easy to understand which kind of bloodshed will have for youth the spell of heroism. In addition to the miscarriage of justice, we have administrative sentences by means of which the Government gets rid of its opponents when no sufficient reasons exist for bringing them within the law. Is this anything else but arbitrary lawlessness? Political prisoners are defenceless victims of an arbitrary despotism, which really approaches more nearly to brutality. By obtaining liberty of speech, personal safety, freedom to assemble, full public legal procedure, education accessible to every talent, the suppression of the administrative despotism, the convocation of a National Assembly to which all classes could nominate delegates—in this way only is there salvation for us."

After perusing the lengthy document, from which only an extract is given here, Alexander III. is reported to have said, "That is all very fine, but what business is it of hers?" That anyone in no way connected with State affairs should have become the spokesman for the welfare of Russia and the Russian people seemed to him utterly incomprehensible.

He did not hesitate, therefore, as soon as Madame Tsebrikoff had returned to Russia immediately after sending her letter, to give his consent for her banishment to a distant province, from which she was released only a number of years after.

Her letter gave vent to the sentiments and opinions which existed and were circulated among the cultured classes of Russia, and created thereby, much more than by its

boldness, an immense sensation, meeting with fervent and general approval in all parts of the Empire. The reactionary rulers had no established progressive programme of their own, nor was one drafted by the opposing party; the latter could only watch with anxious care the intolerable oppression of bureaucratic despotism, as represented by the autocrat and his sympathisers, the burden of which had become so unbearable as to be felt by all the members of society, with the exception of those who themselves formed part of the bureaucracy. Discontent became every day more noticeable. and manifested itself, although no expression was given to it in public, in many indirect ways, which could not be possibly misunderstood. The desirability and necessity of a constitution were the topic of discussion in all enlightened circles, and so loud was the talk at times that the authorities deemed it advisable to interfere in the usual way. The arrests became by degrees so numerous, that the prisons could hardly find any more room for those that were sent there, especially in the north of Russia, where all political criminals were sought out and thence transferred to St. Petersburg to undergo inquiries. In view of this, in the last year of the reign of Alexander III. the Chief of the Imperial Police decided to divide Russia into two halves, in order partly to relieve the congestion of political prisoners. All those persons who were arrested in Poland, South Russia, and in the Caucasus were henceforth to be placed under the supervision of the Chief of the Police of Kieff, at that time General Novitzky, who could deal with them as he thought fit. The remainder were to be, as hitherto, under the care of the highest police authorities, the Minister of the Interior and his subordinates in this capacity.

In spite of all this system, and the many measures adopted to quench expressions of dissatisfaction, the person of the sovereign and autocrat was never really safe. He was

conscious that he had never had any other wish or any other intention than the welfare of his people; he further believed that for the realisation of his scheme he had done everything that a mortal could do. But he was also aware that his efforts had not been crowned with success, that a greater misery than ever was prevalent in different classes of society, and that dissatisfaction with him and his government was so keen in many directions, that it would only require a favourable opportunity to find expression in an attack on his person. Not even at home in his own apartments did he consider himself safe from attempts on his life; whenever he travelled, means for his protection were taken which in any other country would have been almost impossible, and which at any rate would have destroyed the prestige and authority of the reigning sovereign. Mail trains, expresses, as well as ordinary passenger and goods trains on the line by which the Emperor wished to travel were shunted on one side and compelled to wait for hours at a stretch until the two Imperial trains had passed through the line which was closely guarded on each side. During the last years of his reign Alexander did not reside in the Winter Palace, even seldom at St. Petersburg, but at Gatschina, where the vigilance was much more severe, and he consequently believed himself better protected. Not even his few and short journeys were allowed to be made known in advance, although the railway line was so well watched that there was not the slightest possibility of committing an attempt. An Imperial train with a locomotive at full steam stood always in readiness, so that no preparations were necessary which otherwise might lead undesirable persons to suspect that the Tsar was about to travel. In Finland only, the sole part of the powerful Empire where no reactionary spirit had as yet made its presence felt, did Alexander III. seem to feel safe. For many years his sole recreation consisted of the journey which he undertook every

summer along the Finnish coast. There he put aside all constraint and all fear, and proved by his whole appearance that he was happy feeling himself a man among fellow-men who did not plot against his life. No one who saw him during these trips could help noticing what effect the release from the constant fear of death exercised upon him, or how different was his mood as soon as he got rid of the unbearable burden that autocracy laid on his shoulders.

But, instead of being prompted by these circumstances to uphold and protect with greater care than ever the institutions in the shelter of which he felt himself a free man, he began to listen to the advice of the reactionary cabal with regard to Finland, and finally approved of a number of measures having for their object the crushing of the independent position of Finland and its incorporation into the Empire on the same conditions as those of the Russian provinces. The Empire press, foremost of all the *Moskowskia Viedomosti*, which followed instructions from the Pobiedonostseff headquarters, had for several years been making attacks, with increasing violence, on Finnish independence, pretending that it was based absolutely upon trickery, successful misrepresentations, and false interpretation of documents and State acts, while the existence of any convention that gave Finland the right to enjoy an autonomic position was denied. Even Alexander III. was influenced by this flood of anti-Finnish literature which saw the light year after year, and allowed himself to be persuaded to follow the policy of Russification, which now threatens Finland with the same fate as that of Poland and the German provinces on the Baltic.

On being reminded that his consent to such a policy would be a violation of his promise to uphold the Finnish constitution and the special rights of the Finns, a promise which he had made on his ascent to the throne, the Tsar at once abstained from further pursuing the policy in view.

In the last years of his reign Finland had no longer to fear the introduction of such "reforms" as emanated from Russian reactionary partisans. But in Russia not the slightest change took place. There the Pobiedonostseff policy was, when possible, carried out more heedlessly than ever until the death of the Tsar on the 22nd October, 1894. Not even his powerful physique was able in the long run to withstand the constant mental strain and the excess of work which he took upon himself. His overstrung nervous system gave way at last, and made it impossible for him to resist the morbid process in his organism which, though under other conditions the constitution of his body might easily have overcome it, brought his life to a close.

During the last months or weeks of the reign of Alexander III. a proof was given how general the conviction had become that only by having a constitution and a legally restricted bureaucracy would it be possible to secure the future development of Russia in regard to culture and civilisation. This proof consisted of a proposal for a constitution, a number of copies of which were circulated in Russia before the death of the Tsar. Whence it emanated was never quite ascertained, neither, to the knowledge of the author, was the proposal published until, in the November number of *Free Russia*, 1894, F. Volkhofsky[1] communicated it incidentally. Interesting in itself and at the same time as the expression of opinions and hopes to which utterance was given in the most progressive circles, the project referred to in Volkhofsky's article deserves to be set forth in the author's own words:—

"We have received a document of great importance. It

[1] This F. Volkhofsky was arrested in 1871 under suspicion of holding liberal views and spreading them among the workers. After seven years of solitary confinement in various prisons, he was banished to Siberia, and spent there eleven years, until he succeeded in making good his escape. Volkhofsky has been for years the chief editor of *Free Russia*.

is no less a thing than the project of a constitution for Russia, of which many copies are now circulating in that country, and presumably will unite many patriots and aspirants towards liberty in the pursuit of one object. It is the production of a mature mind, of a man of erudition, and of a practical politician, it may be of several. The author or authors had evidently in view, not only the creation of a governmental machine that would work well, but also one which by leaving in existence, though giving greater independence to, all the present State institutions—the Council of Ministers, the State Council, and the Senate—should have on its side their present *personnel*. As the 'Introduction to the Constitution' says, it does not deny, but, on the contrary, is imbued with, those leading ideas concerning the Tsar and the people which are dominant among the masses; at the same time it is thoroughly democratic, giving ample scope and fair play to every heroic endeavour of the individual in Russia, the most potent force of progress, rather than assisting the associations and corporations alien to the social conditions of Russian life. But this is not all The individual is protected against any possible arbitrary aggression on the part of the representative institutions themselves. The basis on which the whole edifice of the inalienable rights of citizens is built up is the law courts. All the judges, from the justices of the peace up to the senators, are not only not removable, but cannot be promoted without their own consent. The appointment of judges is in the hands of the courts themselves, except that of the senators, who are appointed by the Tsar, who has in each case to choose from three candidates recommended to him by the Senate. The control of the elections is in the hands of the district courts. The Senate is the supreme court of cassation and sometimes a court of appeal; it also controls the legality of the proceedings both of the elective bodies and the Government;

it can call to account members of the National Congress, and collects the statistics of the population for the purposes of election. The promulgation of laws is entirely in its hands. The Attorney-General and the Comptroller-General are dependent upon the State.

"At the head of the State is a hereditary monarch, who rules through a Ministry, responsible before the Chamber of Deputies, which may find an indictment against them. He appoints the Prime Minister and his colleagues according to the latter's recommendation. He nominates the members of the State Council. He is the head of the army and navy. He may veto any decision of the Chamber of Deputies; but the Budget passed by the Chamber, with whatever alterations, can be vetoed only as a whole, not in parts.

"The permanent representative bodies are of two kinds, the provincial *seyms*[1] and the Imperial Chamber of Deputies. The provinces formed for this purpose must consist of several of the present governments. Poland, for instance, would have a legislative assembly (*Seym*), Finland its autonomy.

"For every 75,000 inhabitants there is to be a member of the *Seym*, whilst every member of the Chamber of Deputies represents 300,000 citizens. The functions of the *Seym* and the Chamber correspond in the main with those of the British House of Commons, the provincial corporations dealing only with matters touching their own provinces. The Government is represented in the *Seym* by delegates of the Ministry. The Imperial Budget is, of course, drawn up by the Ministry, but cannot be accepted without the sanction of the Chamber, which has the power to reduce the expenditure, but not to increase it. The Ministry is compelled to lay the Budget before the Chamber at a given date to allow the opportunity of fully discussing the same.

[1] The nearest equivalent to this is the *Landtag*.

Bills are drawn up by the Government, as also by any member of the House, and even by people outside the House. In case of disputes between the higher Government institutions or between the Chamber of Deputies and the sovereign, an institution is called into life which forms a new feature in the constitution. It is called *Semsky Sobor*, which can be best translated by the words 'National Congress.' It is simply a plebiscite, organised into a national corporation, being summoned by Imperial manifesto, and only for the purpose of saying 'Aye' or 'No' to certain questions which must be mentioned in the manifesto itself, together with a full statement of the points upon which the opposing parties disagree. No law approved by the Tsar can be promulgated by anybody outside the Senate, which, if it should find the measure inconsistent with the constitution, refers the matter back to the Tsar, who either annuls his approval or calls together the *Semsky Sobor*. No law imposing upon the citizens any new taxes or imposts, or restrictions of their rights, or fines, or which may have a retrospective action, can be carried out without the sanction of the *Semsky Sobor*.

"The candidates for the *Semsky Sobor* are bound to make a public declaration in writing as to how they intend to vote in the coming session, and if the elected deputies fail to keep their word, their votes shall be annulled and compared by the Senate with the pledges entered into.

"The suffrage is direct and universal, 'one man, one vote,' the only restriction being with regard to age. The age for obtaining the franchise for one of the representative assemblies is fixed at twenty-five years. *Habeas corpus*, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and of religion, together with the free right to choose a vocation and way of living, shall be introduced, without restrictions as to domicile or nationality.

"To this must be added two important and significant innovations for Russia. The first consists in the right of every citizen to bring an action against any official for an offence committed in the execution of his duty, the other in the prohibition of officials from pleading 'not guilty' because they had to act at the command of a superior officer.

"If one recognises that, besides all these safeguards, the greatest care has been taken to secure the independence of the representative bodies as well as that of the citizens, it follows that the proposal, although not free from several weak points, has at least been earnestly and carefully thought out. As an instance of these weak points, we may mention the Senate, which has in fact nothing else to do but to formulate the laws agreed upon in principle by the National Assembly, a work which could be carried out just as easily by either the Ministry or a committee drawn from one of the representative assemblies. As, however, the author of this proposal had in view the maintenance of all the higher institutions of the State, this was unavoidable. All who remember the former attempts to bring about a representative system of government for Russia will see that the proposed constitution has revived in the idea of the *Semsky Sobor* the plans of Koscheleff and other Slavophiles. But their weak, sentimental, and, regarded practically, senseless idea of 'a direct connection between the Tsar and the people' assumes, through the new proposition, a solid and really democratic sense, and is therefore sure of the sympathy of the various classes of the Russian people.

"A short explanation of the present political situation in Russia is given at the beginning, and its carefully chosen words, compared with what we know from other sources, lead us to the conviction that it puts the present state of affairs in Russia in the proper light. To convey to our readers an idea of this we cannot do better than quote the

following: 'Two questions have now been put before the Russian people: (1) Is a constitution for Russia necessary? (2) Is a constitution in Russia possible? The first is a mere question of form; it has in fact already been answered in the affirmative by the Tsar, whose daily experience reminds him of the necessity of a constitutional government for the proper working of the administration. It has also been answered in the same way by an overpowering majority of the ruling statesmen, and it is only the rooted habit of bureaucratic hypocrisy that closes their lips. The same answer has, with only a few exceptions, been forthcoming from the Russian people and all their representatives, from the press, the *zemstvos*, and the town councils. Even the uneducated classes have responded; for the dissatisfaction with the arbitrary government, which has no regard for the law, is general, and the desire for freedom and justice is on the increase. To conclude, it is no longer merely a question of the revolutionaries who in former times disparaged the importance of a constitutional government for the welfare of the people.

"'It is true that various classes of our society have different conceptions of this constitution, but this already touches the second question, concerning the possibility of a constitution for Russia, as for a certain given time only one kind of constitution is possible in a country, *i.e.*, that which corresponds with its social and political peculiarities. Soon, very soon, a constitution for Russia will become the subject of a general discussion, because everybody is already thinking of it. The time will come when the stones shall speak. Prince Meschtschersky[1] will propose a constitution on his plan, De Witte and Yermoloff[2] one according to theirs, and

[1] Editor of the reactionary paper *Graschdanin*, who demanded privileges for the nobility.

[2] The Finance and Agricultural Ministers, who are considered the representatives of liberalism in the present Ministry, but who are zealous defenders of Protectionism.

Pobiedonostseff will mould one from his point of view. But in our country neither a landlord, nor a *bourgeoisie*, nor a clerical constitution is possible, because with us there has been no survival from the Middle Ages of those classes of the population which upheld in Western Europe a landlord or clerical constitution, whilst capitalism has not yet had time to bring our people under the yoke of the *bourgeoisie*. As a devoted champion of the people, the educated class must propose a form of constitutional government based not upon the demand of one or another special class for privileges, but upon a pure and simple scheme of general welfare, upon a righteous combination of the various interests of the country and the necessities of the State as a whole.'

"Whatever may be its weakness"—thus does Volkhofsky conclude his article—"the scheme has for its main object this ideal, and its proposition is without doubt an event of great political significance."

Precisely because he is one of the principal representatives of that revolutionary group which formerly was only concerned with socialism, towards which purely political organisation was merely preparatory, the opinion of Volkhofsky regarding the proposed constitution is of a certain importance. He demonstrates that he and the whole radical group who stood, and still stand, behind the journal *Free Russia* have changed their views, and have given up the thought of socialistic changes in the government, honestly acknowledging that neither socialistic nor other reforms can be thought of unless a free, constitutional system of government be first introduced.

This was the same view that the Narodnaia Volia group, the terrorists with the executive committee at their head, had formerly proclaimed. They would hardly have gone so far in their demands as the still more advanced

liberals, around whose programme all the discontented would probably have rallied if they had seen any chance of success for the constitutional movement. The wish for a change existed in just as high and wide a degree as the wish for the emancipation of the peasants at the end of the reign of Nicholas I. The better elements in Russia were equally convinced of the necessity of the new great reforms discussed everywhere and by everyone willing to engage in the work of progress. The death of Alexander III. freed the Government from the fetters which their previous policy had put upon them. His son and successor had in every respect a free hand as regards the home policy. All the thinkers among his people expected and hoped that he would give the signal for a change of the reactionary regime, and would in any case have greeted the least fulfilment of their hopes with an enthusiasm still greater than that which the first step of his father in the friendly direction of reform had awakened. It was entirely in the power of Nicholas II. to place his government at a stroke among the most popular which Russia could ever have possessed, and the most blissful and fruitful for the people.

THE PRESENT ERA.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE REIGN OF NICHOLAS II.

It was with a really touching tenacity that the whole of Russia clung to the hope that with the accession of Nicholas II. better times would set in. Nobody would believe but that the young Tsar would put an end to that period of desperate reaction which had lasted such a long time; consequently, his every step was followed with intense and anxious expectation, and every one of his words was weighed. As a rule there is some indication of the character of an heir apparent in some or other opinion expressed or action done by him before his accession to the throne; but of Nicholas II. nothing was really known. It is true he had acted as spokesman in the great charity committee and had taken some part in the administration of the great Siberian railway, but all he had uttered in the execution of these functions or had written was so trivial that no other conclusion could have been drawn from this but that the natural gifts of the future sovereign were very indifferent. On the other hand, it was asserted, and this in court circles, that the heir apparent had kept silent designedly, because he knew that he would not be able to carry out his will and his views. It was quite natural that in an autocratic empire the heir apparent should observe a very reserved demeanour lest he expose himself to the suspicion of being in opposition to the reigning sovereign. In many circles this was accepted as an explanation why he should be so reticent whenever he had occasion to appear in public, and it was

still hoped that he would show himself much more liberal than his father.

At the commencement it appeared as if these hopes were to be fulfilled. Many minor facts indicated that the new Tsar was not going to show much forbearance towards the arrogant aristocracy and the arbitrary bureaucracy. In the first days of his reign, for instance, he strongly upbraided the all-powerful Prefect of Police, Wahl, of St. Petersburg, who ordered the police to pull down the mourning decorations from the house of the Countess Stroganoff which, as a relative of the Imperial family, she had ordered to be put up immediately after receiving private news of the death of the Tsar and without awaiting official communication. The matter was reported to the Tsar, who soon afterwards, when complaints had been received from foreign newspaper correspondents as to their annoying treatment at the hands of the Prefect of Police, prescribed three days' arrest for this powerful functionary. Nicholas II., moreover, put an abrupt end to the system of espionage to which his father and predecessor had adhered, and which gradually had become a really grave scandal. At the wedding of the new Tsar it was noticed by all observant people how everything had altered in this respect. It was also perceived with great satisfaction that Nicholas II. appeared to set less value upon official etiquette than his predecessor on the autocratic throne. He had written to the Governor of Moscow, the Grand Duke Sergius, and signed the letter "Your affectionate nephew"! Actions such as this were considered as auspicious indications and were much commented upon, although everybody knew also that these symptoms only concerned the personal character of the Tsar, and not his political tendencies.

But with regard to the latter also, signs of much promise were observed. The Archbishop of Poland had received an order to have the oath of allegiance to the new Tsar

administered in Russian, and he had passed on the order to the priesthood under him. Many members of these, with the Bishops of Lublin and Sandomir at their head, however, administered the oath in the Polish translation, which induced the Governor-General, General Gurko, to make reprisals by means of arrests, fines, etc. But a member of the highest Polish aristocracy applied to the bride of the Tsar, Princess Alice, soliciting her intercession, and the result was a prompt telegram from the Tsar to the authorities in Poland, who were ordered to allow the Poles to swear the oath in their own language. Shortly before a deputation of eminent Poles, with Archbishop Popul at their head, had called upon Gurko and requested him to transmit to the Tsar the expression of their regret on the occasion of the death of the Tsar Alexander III., together with the assurance of their loyalty. General Gurko replied that he doubted the sincerity of their feelings, and that he hoped the new Tsar would continue the policy of the deceased with regard to the Russification of Poland.

The deputation retired after having expressed their intention to be present at the funeral of Alexander III. and to make their obeisance to the new sovereign. For ten days the deputation waited for a reply to their telegram, but when no reply arrived the members applied once more to Gurko, as they feared that the telegram had not been sent at all. At the same time they wished to know at what time they would have to be in St. Petersburg. The Governor-General received them still less graciously than on the first occasion, declaring that, as they had already sworn the oath of allegiance, further assurances were superfluous, that he could not understand whom they really represented, and that only those who wore court uniform would be allowed to go up to St. Petersburg. After some argument, the General left the reception room without taking leave of the deputation. The latter now decided

to start on the journey without the permission of the Governor, with the result that the Tsar paid special attention to the deputation and received them very kindly.

Most remarkable of all was his action with regard to Finland, where the oath of allegiance had not been taken and homage not been done until the Tsar, as constitutional sovereign of this country, had issued his manifesto. That the Tsar had not been induced to withhold such a manifesto on this account, a step he had been advised to take, was construed as almost a proof of the liberal views of the Tsar, which again awakened brighter hopes in all those who were anxiously following the course of events.

Even the foreign press seemed to share these hopes, and in all parts of Europe the papers talked about the future reforms in Russia as an accomplished fact. In Russia itself as well as in Poland the papers were full of praise for the Tsar and his intentions, of assurances of loyalty, of the love and admiration of the people, with other expressions of this kind, all of them based on groundless hopes, and probably with the purpose of arousing in the young sovereign such a relish for the sweets of popularity, that he would feel induced so to regulate his actions that he might taste still more of them.

But soon strong doubts began to arise in well-informed circles—*i.e.* those closely connected with the court—as to the desire of the Tsar to enter upon a liberal course. After his return from the Crimea the expected changes in the higher circles of the administration did not take place. The relations between the Tsar and the Ministers taken over from his father remained of the best, with the exception of the Minister of Public Highways, Krivoschein, who had acted so clumsily, according to the credible reports at that time generally circulating in St. Petersburg, in the squandering of State funds that he had to be sacrificed by the cabal.

It appeared as if everything would continue as of old. The Minister of the Interior, Durnovo, even went so far as to state in a "private" conversation with the editors of the leading papers in the capital that no alterations in home politics would take place, but that all would remain in the old rut. The rumour of this spread amongst the public, without destroying, however, all the hopes which had been entertained. The Tsar had not yet expressed himself in this matter in a positive way. The public were waiting for the manifesto which, as usual on such occasions, would be published at his impending marriage with Princess Alice, and that he would give therein some indications of his intentions.

On the 26th January, 1895, the manifesto was issued, and greeted by the reptile press that was friendly to the Government with flattering expressions of the usual servile character. Other Russian papers published the manifesto without any comment, which in any case the censor would not have allowed. The foreign press, according to custom, followed suit by commenting upon the marriage manifesto and describing it as an expression of extraordinary grace and lenity. But people in Russia were not disposed so readily to accept all the beautiful phrases of the document without first analysing its meaning and contents. The result was that the people felt anything but overwhelmed by the Imperial clemency, which in nearly every line was nothing else but a mockery.

To the peasants the usual remission of taxes was granted which the collectors themselves could not obtain from them, even by the most liberal application of blows; wherefore the "grace" really consisted of no more than the remission of the blows, which would probably have been meted out to the impoverished debtors of the State or the Tsar.

The Poles, or the few of them who had been exiled to

Siberia for their participation in the insurrection of thirty-two years ago, and who had survived their punishment, received as their share of the "clemency" permission to return and to settle in the Empire, except in those places where their stay might be considered as dangerous for the public order by the Ministry of the Interior. That is to say, they were allowed, after thirty-two years of exile, to exchange their place of banishment for another one, for the aforesaid discretion of the Ministry of the Interior amounted to nothing else. They were still outside the law and under the supervision of the highest police authority.

As regards the political criminals, the Imperial mercy was extended only to those who had offended against Article 442 of the criminal law, *i.e.*, to persons who had committed "crimes" against "pictures, busts, or statues of the Tsar or his family" or who had given vent to their sentiments "in disrespectful or offending words about the Tsar and his family." They obtained pardon for their crimes, which in a really civilised country would have appeared ridiculous.[1] With regard to actual criminal offenders—"actual" according to Russian interpretation—all alleviations and mitigations, as enumerated in the manifesto, were made absolutely dependent on the good opinion of the administration, since it was intended that these alleviations and mitigations should be granted to those individuals only who should "by good conduct" have deserved them. In other words, the Imperial clemency came to this, that the Tsar transferred to the administration or bureaucracy the right to pardon those who might be submitted by the various officials for consideration. Moreover, as administrative officials under "proper guidance" could of course recognise nothing short of renunciation of the views and principles for which the "criminals" had been punished, it will easily be seen that the clemency could only

[1] Germany excluded.

be enjoyed by the renegades amongst the revolutionaries and oppositionists. A special "clemency" would not have been required in their cases, as the Government had repeatedly proved by isolated pardons of "penitent" political criminals. Alexander III. had even fully pardoned Leo Tifomiroff, who had applied for it, and at the same time recanted his former views, although he had been a member of the committee which condemned Alexander II., the father of the pardoning Tsar, to death.

Finally, with regard to the political fugitives who were in safety outside the frontiers of Holy Russia, the manifesto declared that the Minister of the Interior would be permitted to lay before the Tsar the petitions of such fugitives for obtaining the right to return to Russia; *i.e.*, he could do so if he liked, but was not compelled to do so. In this case also the decision was made entirely dependent on the Minister, the bureaucracy in fact. Only those petitions which the Minister declared worthy of notice, of course on the strength of reports of subordinates, the secret police, and the gendarmerie, were submitted to the Tsar, whose part in this respect was, so to speak, a mere comedy. Excepted from this right of the Minister of the Interior were those petitions from fugitives who had offended against Article 459 of the criminal law, which, in fact, could have been applied without exception to any political Russian refugee. This article states: "For opposition against the highest authority—*i.e.*, for open rebellion and conspiracy against the Tsar and the State—as also for the intention to overthrow the Government, or the system of government, in all or part of the Empire, for putting such an intention in motion, participating in or supporting it, parties are rendered liable to the death-penalty. Whoever may be cognisant of such criminal designs and has not, although able to do so, informed the authorities, will render himself liable to the same penalty."

It will be seen that this paragraph is so constructed that any attempt of opposition to the existing Government can, by stretching a point, be termed a transgression within the terms of the article. The interpretation of the marriage manifesto to the effect that petitions of individuals who had transgressed this paragraph, and had shaken the dust from off their feet, should not be considered by the Minister of the Interior, made the right of proposing political fugitives for pardon all but a farce. There were in fact scarcely any fugitives to whom the manifesto applied without reservation.

The sectarian victims of religious persecution were not even considered worthy of the semblance of pardon. Regarding the hundreds and thousands of Stundists, Duchoborzen, Old Believers, and others who had suffered from Pobiedonostseff's fanaticism, the marriage manifesto had not a word to say. Their dark fate was not illuminated by a single ray of hope. Again, nothing was shown of the mercy of the Tsar to those who had been punished for transgressing the regulations of the censorship, a class of "criminal" that is usually considered in the publication of acts of mercy. Instead of this, the manifesto repeatedly spoke about the administrative system of banishment as one of the immovable institutions of the Empire, without a single word to indicate an intention of bringing this system of administration into normal line with the law.

Two conclusions only were possible with respect to the contents of this edict. Either the young Tsar, with unparalleled cynicism and flippancy, had allowed dust to be thrown into his own eyes and those of all the people who were following his first acts as a ruler with the closest attention, or he had simply signed a document the contents of which he did not really understand at all. The first conclusion was almost unthinkable of a young man of whose personal character nothing bad was known, and who was

consequently credited with goodness. However little consolation there was in this, it admitted the possibility of the Tsar being released from the influence of the reactionary "cabal" which surrounded him and had induced him to sign the wordy but empty phrases of the edict. One was not inclined to give up hopes of a brighter time so long as it was still possible to entertain them.

But this possibility of hope was soon denied to the Russian optimists. On the occasion of the edict of the Tsar at the time of his accession to the throne and on the occasion of his marriage, deputations were appointed from the various provinces of his empire to congratulate him; and on these occasions the *zemstvos* of several provinces availed themselves of the opportunity to convey to the young sovereign the expression of their actual feeling and of the desire of the country. Thus, for example, the *zemstvo* assembly of the province of Tver presented an address which was, perhaps, the most radical of all, the contents of which, omitting the unimportant parts, were as follows:—

"YOUR MAJESTY,—In the festal days at the commencement of your reign over Russia the *zemstvo* assembly of Tver presents to you the greeting of faithful subjects. . . . With the whole of Russia, we have listened to the significant words with which your Majesty made known your accession to the Russian throne. We are filled with gratitude for your resolve to devote yourself to the furtherance of the happiness of your people, and we hope for the success of the great task which has been bestowed upon you. We hope that the voices which represent the necessities of the people will be listened to from the throne. We hope that our temporal well-being will be developed together with the unalterable respect for the law, both on the side of the people, and also of the administration; because the law, which in Russia is an expression of the will of the monarch, should stand

higher than the changing views of the individual instruments of this sublime Power. We earnestly hope that both the rights of individual citizens and also those of the corporations will be protected. Sire, we trust that public bodies and corporations will grasp the occasion and the right of expressing their views on questions which touch them, and that the monarch will have the opportunity to hear the opinions and wishes not only of the administration, but likewise of the Russian people. We believe that your Majesty by keeping in closer touch with representatives of the Russian people of all grades, who are in the same measure devoted to the throne and to the country, will find a fresh source of strength and success for the noble objects you entertain."

The *zemstvo* assembly of Tula had sent an address by their deputation which, after a number of humble assurances of their loyalty, faithfulness, and devotion to the Tsar, closed with the following words:—

"As men standing in near relation to the people, we cherish a strong conviction that local needs can only be met by representatives of local interests, and we beg our Tsar to repose trust in us, this being a necessary condition for fruitful efforts made on behalf of the country. We beg for free access to the throne for the voices of the *zemstvo* assemblies."

None of the other *zemstvo* addresses were couched in such plainness of phrase as those here cited, but several of them expressed the same sense and spirit and were, therefore, regarded as improper. All the addresses, before being presented to the Tsar, were required to be lodged with the Minister of the Interior, who had to decide whether they were suited to the ear of his Majesty or not. All that betrayed a progressive tone were retained by the Ministry of the Interior as being unfit for presentation to the

Tsar, and the members of the deputation from Tver, who had overstepped all bounds of propriety, were deprived by the Minister of the Interior of the right of taking part in the large general assembly of deputations which waited upon the sovereign. Still the Tsar was, of course, informed of the transgression of the limits of loyal duties with which some of the provincial deputations had been charged, and thought himself unable to pass over their improper behaviour in silence. The answer to the wishes expressed by a number of the deputations was communicated to them by the Tsar when he received the whole of their number in solemn audience. This answer had to be regarded as the political programme of Nicholas II., by which he also conveyed to the most sanguine the assurance that all their hopes were dashed with respect to any changes of a progressive kind being introduced into the system of rule by his personal initiative. In this sense was the speech understood by everyone, and that the presumption was correct is proved by the reactionary policy of the present day, which immediately followed, and was first hinted at, in the reply from the throne. It was as follows:—

"I rejoice to see here the representatives of all grades of the kingdom assembled together with the purpose of giving expression to their loyal feeling of devotion. I believe in the sincerity of this feeling, which has been shared by every Russian from time immemorial. But it has been brought to my knowledge that recently, on the occasion of the presentation of addresses on the part of the *zemstvo* assemblies, the voices of persons found expression who had allowed themselves to be led away by foolish fancies with respect to the participation of the *zemstvo* representatives in the general direction of the internal affairs of the State. Let it be understood by all that I devote my whole power to the best service of the people, but that the principle of the

autocracy will be maintained by me as firmly and unswervingly as it was by my ever revered father."

This was a speech which left nothing to be desired in clearness of expression. How it was understood and what was the impression which it made on the *zemstvo* deputations is shown best by the fact that on the occasion of the thanksgiving service held on the following day there were only thirty members of the six hundred present. All the special correspondents of the European organs communicated the information that the speech of the Tsar had produced general dissatisfaction and grumbling.

"Looked at politically," says Stepniak, "the speech of the 20th December indicates a turning-point in the history of our progressive movement. Hitherto the Government had declared that it was only from the ranks of persons outside the law, revolutionary firebrands, socialists, and other ignoble persons, that demands for reforms in our political system had emanated. Nicholas II. was the first openly to recognise that the country had asked from him through its empowered representatives a constitutional reform, which, however, he (the Tsar) had refused to grant, and had decided stoutly to resist as long as he should be able."

The reactionary counsellors of Alexander III. had succeeded in bringing Nicholas II. also completely under their influence. The continuation of the Pobiedonostseff regime was assured, and the Tsar had allowed himself to be influenced to give his approval to the reaction in its worst form. All that was left to the freethinkers and revolutionaries of the opposition was to make the attempt to call forth a powerful movement, a general and deep unrest such as the Government out of an instinct of self-preservation would be compelled to deal with by working on new lines.

Their efforts were, and are still, supported in the strongest manner by the reactionary party themselves. The latter

have during the whole period of the reign of Nicholas II. aggravated the discontent and unrest by every means at their disposal, and have incited the people to demonstrations of a constantly stronger and more general character. They have not yet perceived that even their capacity for suppression has its limits, and that such means lose their sting by too frequent and extensive application.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE REACTION UNDER NICHOLAS II.

THE practical application of the principles of government laid down by Nicholas II. in his speech to the assembled deputations was not long in making itself manifest. One of the first victims was a member of the Tver deputation, a well-known landowner of the name of Golovatscheff, seventy years of age, and author of the work "Ten Years' Reform." By command of the Tsar, he was dismissed from his position as member of the *zemstvo* assembly and commanded to betake himself to his estate—a mild form of banishment. This, as it were, affixed a seal to the decision with respect to the audacity of the *zemstvo* assemblies in daring to express their wish for reforms as already enunciated by the Tsar.

But nothing came of all this. On the contrary, it was as if the reactionary authorities had, after the short pause of uncertainty, taken a new lease of life and new energy, more especially as regards Durnovo, the Minister of the Interior, and the Procurator of the Holy Synod. By common action they moved the Tsar, immediately after the commencement of his reign, to give his approbation to fresh measures for the persecution of the Stundists, who were absolutely forbidden to assemble for worship in any form of their belief, their sect being regarded, according to a Ministerial circular, as a very dangerous one for the Church and State.

The censorship was put in force with greater strength than ever. In the list of forbidden literature there were included by one single order no less than two hundred and fifty books

that had been previously allowed to be freely sold and read in Russia, among which were several of Tolstoi's works, Korolenko's stories, Herbert Spencer's writings, etc., all being books without political tendencies, although dangerous for the Government inasmuch as they gave the readers reasons for contemplation and comparisons. Shortly after this there were seventy-two various books totally forbidden in the Little Russian or Ukraine language, all of them poetical or *belles lettres*. It was the language which made them unwelcome to the Government, because they had declared war long since against the Little Russian nationality and sought to suppress it by every means. Persecution of this kind, moreover, assumed fresh energy and strength under Nicholas II. About the same date as that of the censor's circular already mentioned there occurred a very remarkable incident: the prohibition of a young lady, who had passed all the prescribed examinations, from taking up her post as teacher in a primary school because her accent was Little Russian! On the same ground two village school teachers in the province of Tschernigoff and not less than eleven in the province of Pultava were dismissed.

For quite other, but not less ridiculous and pointless, reasons two professors were dismissed at Moscow from the university of that place, namely, M. Miljuvoff and M. Besobrasoff. The former had rendered himself liable to no special complaint on the part of the authorities; he was dismissed by the Minister of Instruction on the ground of "generally injurious tendencies." The latter, on the other hand, had committed a serious misdemeanour by giving an address on the rights of women, and consequently received his *congé*.

The wishes and the efforts of the Government with respect to the suppression of enlightenment and progress are revealed in the clearest manner by a special communication of that time, drawn up and signed by the Minister of the Interior

and addressed to the Minister of Public Education, Delianoff. The communication, dated 5th (17th) February, 1895, is unfortunately too long for us to give here *in extenso*, but some extract from it will sufficiently illustrate its spirit and purpose.

"Among the social phenomena which in late years have shown themselves," says M. Ivan Durnovo in commencing his report, "special attention should be drawn to the tendency to raise the level of general instruction by organising popular lectures, and by the institution of libraries and reading rooms for the free use of scientific, moral, and literary publications for the benefit of factory operatives and the peasantry, must be specially indicated." Such efforts M. Durnovo considers "praiseworthy and desirable in principle," but he is at the same time disturbed by the activity shown in this field by the "Komitet Gramotnosti" ("the Committee of Education for the People"), which committee is a branch of the "Free Economical Society" of St. Petersburg. The causes of his disquietude are, according to the Minister's own statement, the following: that those who carry out the labours of the said society (young medical men, teachers, statistical agents, students at the university and other high schools) belong to the so-called intelligent classes, that the popular education movement has been constantly advancing, that the same appears to be systematically organised, that the best liberal authors devote themselves to popular literature, and that the society is conducted "by experienced and able leaders." All these circumstances contain, in the opinion of the Minister of the Interior, a certain element of danger to the State, and he therefore declares that the co-operation of private persons and societies in the work of popular education "is only useful and permissible on condition that such co-operation be in agreement with the recognised system of government as represented by the Ministry of Public Instruction." On

the ground of these apprehensions and wishes, which he states with as much prolixity as incredible cynicism,[1] the Minister of the Interior proposes in his paper that his colleague in the Ministry of Instruction should issue directions for the said "Komitet Gramotnosti," which as a branch of the Free Economical Society stands under the control of the Minister of Agriculture, to be placed in future under the supervision of the Ministry of Instruction. "This Ministry," he continues, "alone possesses sufficient competence and *unscrupulousness as regards the strict limits of the censorship*[2] to be in a position to indicate those among the books published for the people which are calculated to exercise an injurious influence."

The Minister of the Interior himself declared that the censorship is restricted by the "law," by which he is understood to mean the circular of the Ministry of the Interior and of the Holy Synod. He, therefore, wished that this parody of legality should not be a hindrance to the suppression of popular enlightenment, and that the Ministry which had made the suppression, and not the furthering, of popular instruction its only task should make itself master of all the means of control in this field. It turned out according to M. Durnovo's wish. The said society was placed under the Ministry of Instruction, and by that act its chief sphere of activity was closed.

The motive of this specially brutal act of animosity against the efforts of those seeking to improve the education of the people is perhaps to be found in the circumstance that the

[1] Among other points he calls attention to the fact that the censorship, inasmuch as its position is restricted within certain limits—the Russian censorship regulated by the law!—is not always able to counteract the cleverly masked propagandism of certain ideas, and has no formal ground to forbid certain books and the general dissemination of views which do not always agree with the general mode of thinking, and with the spirit of orthodoxy and State procedure.

[2] The italics of this sentence are not in the original.

"Komitet Gramotnosti" had undertaken to collect statistical material respecting the primary schools, with the object of displaying the result of its labours at the Nijni Novgorod exhibition of all Russian productions as a fully explained statement respecting primary education in Russia. For this purpose the "Komitet Gramotnosti" had sent a circular with the request for all necessary information to the religious teachers and school teachers throughout the kingdom. This, however, only resulted in both Pobiedonostseff and Delianoff issuing a "confidential" circular in which the former notified the bishops that the religious teachers were not under the obligation of furnishing the desired particulars, as the Minister of Public Instruction had simply ordered the school teachers to pass over the questions without paying any notice thereto.

That the Jews, in view of such a spirit on the part of the authorities, should receive no milder treatment than under the rule of the late Tsar, is not to be wondered at. In order to illustrate how the Government applied themselves to the treatment of this class of citizens it is enough to quote from the official circular with respect to the travelling of the Jews within the Empire. In this document, which the Minister of War, Vannofsky, issued, and which was communicated to the public by the official gazette, *Pravitelstvenni Vestnik*, of the 4th April, 1895, we find the following:—

"According to Article 13 of the passport law as revised in the year 1893, Jews are forbidden to stay or settle in the provinces of the Don, Kuban, and Terek. Consequently they have simply and solely the right to enter those governments in those cases enumerated in Articles 157, 159, 161; but these articles mention nothing about the Jews having the right, on the ground of health, to leave those regions where they are already settled in order to remove to other districts of the Empire. According to the order at present in force with regard to the Jews (law respecting passports,

Article 158, p. 1), they have only the right of availing themselves of sanatoria and mineral springs in Kieff. The Jews are nevertheless using, for the benefit of their health, the mineral springs in the Caucasus.

"Therefore, seeing that, besides the springs in Pietigorsk, Zelsnovodsk, Essentuki, and Kislovodsk, mineral waters are to be found in other parts of the government of Terek as well as in the provinces of the Don and Kuban, I find it necessary, in order to avoid misunderstanding in this respect, to draw the attention of the authorities of the Caucasus and the Don to the fact that, according to the laws, the Jews are not allowed to visit Terek, the Don, and Kuban, either for the purpose of using the medicinal springs or of submitting themselves to any medical treatment."

Added to the above, the section regarding the treatment of the Jews may be closed with the remark that the Government of Nicholas II. had in no way altered the policy against them since 1895. That a Minister should instruct the authorities under him to forbid to a whole class of citizens admission to sanitary establishments in consequence only of nationality or race is a fact which clearly shows the utter disregard of a monarch for the claims of humanity and the rights of justice, and requires no further comment or explanation. That this contempt has been grafted into the lower officials as well as into the various classes of the population is proved by the frequent communications that have been made public up to the present about "unrest" in different places where the population was pre-eminently composed of Jews. These disturbances are nothing less than the outbreaks of race hatred, which the Government does not endeavour to suppress. What result this policy has yielded is most clearly seen from the fact that the Jews in the last few years have decided, in larger numbers and with greater determination, to resist autocracy. They have

been forced to the conclusion that they cannot entertain any hopes as to the future so long as autocracy exists, and they have, in spite of their inborn dislike to everything suggestive of a combat, founded several extensive organisations of revolutionary tendencies, ready to go hand in hand with all those who have taken up the cudgels against Tsardom.

In just as insane a manner, from the humane as well as from the political point of view, have the young students frequenting the various high schools of Russia in the reign of the present Tsar been treated. The first collision after the ascent of the new Tsar to the throne took place in March, 1895, in St. Petersburg. It had its origin in the decision made by the students of that university to forward a petition for the reintroduction of the university statutes of the year 1863, which would grant them a greater amount of liberty. The authorities prohibited the collection of signatures towards the petition; and, as the Prefect of the Police, General von Wahl, feared that the students would take advantage of the festivities in celebration of the founding of the university to infringe this prohibition, he ordered the police to watch that no students on that day visited the taverns. In front of one of these a conflict arose, in consequence of the brutal way in which the police carried out the order, when a number of students were maltreated by the police and their usual auxiliary troops, the "Dvornikos"[1] of the neighbourhood. For similar reasons arose most of the conflicts between the students and the authorities, until by degrees it became quite evident whence came this miserable state of affairs.

Characteristic of this regime and its spirit are instances of the kind which occurred in Sarapol, in the province of Viatka, where two youths of the public school, one seventeen

[1] Grooms and menial servants, paid by the householders, but appointed and dismissed by the police, and forming part thereof.

years old and the other somewhat younger, were expelled because on the day on which they were to go to Communion they did not abstain from all food, but partook in the morning of tea as usual. In Tomsk another student of only ten years of age was expelled because to one of his comrades, who was trying to insult him by shouting out, "Jew!" he had replied: "Your Christ was also a Jew;" such conduct was held to be blasphemous. In Odessa the students in this respect were treated worse. Some boys of tender years were condemned to prison and exile for distributing prohibited literature among the working classes, and two schoolgirls, the sisters Steinrich, fourteen and fifteen years old respectively, were arrested and kept some time in gaol because they had taken lessons from a politically suspected person.

Of the events in the first year of the new Tsar's reign the revival of the persecutions against the Duchoborzen deserves to be mentioned. Members of this sect who were doing military duty among the troops in the fortress of Kars returned their weapons because of the outrages committed on their co-religionists in the province of Elisabetpol, and probably in order to avoid the temptation to use them. The authorities endeavoured to intimidate them by pointing out the probability of their being executed, ordered gallows to be erected, and placed the delinquents under them. But, as none would give in, their superiors had to yield and content themselves with inflicting an ordinary disciplinary punishment. The Duchoborzen, however, would not submit. In one of their communities the reservists collected all the weapons, carried them, followed by the whole of their co-religionists, to a place in front of the village, and threw them in a heap, over which they poured petroleum and let it burn, while the company sang a few hymns. As punishment the governor of the district ordered no less than sixty-three reservists to be flogged, and banished thirty-five whole

families to some unknown spot, without allowing them to take the least of their possessions with them.

Volumes could be filled with examples showing the spirit that has been dominant since the first day of the present Tsar's reign, examples about which he himself probably knows nothing. Since space forbids one to go into too many incidents, a few instances taken from all the years since Nicholas II. mounted the throne must suffice to show that the reaction has never ceased or slackened, but, on the contrary, has uninterruptedly grown more acute, so that the day cannot be far distant when it can proceed no further.

On the 27th October, 1895, the Minister of the Interior, Ivan Durnovo, was dismissed. His position had long been precarious in consequence of having mixed himself up with the scandalous money transactions of the discharged Minister of Commerce, Krivoschein. So shamelessly, and at the same time so clumsily, had Krivoschein behaved that a commission of inquiry consisting of three persons had to be formed to go deeper into his transactions. Durnovo succeeded for a time in backing up Krivoschein, from whom he had borrowed considerable sums. The Tsar even ordered that nothing should be made public about the inquiry. But Durnovo's connection with his late colleague was brought to light and turned out to be of such a kind that he was dismissed.[1] The successor of Durnovo was Councillor J. L. Gorevykin, who has made himself known as an excellent representative of the Russian official class, and at the same time as a fanatical hater of the Jews. It will not be wide of the mark to say

[1] More than a month previously to his dismissal a correspondent of the *New York Tribune* was able to state that Durnovo had received the order to apply for his dismissal, and that Sipiagin had been appointed as his successor at St. Petersburg. The reason of his dismissal was known to everybody in the capital of the Empire, because the minutes of the inquiry commission had been given to the public and even published in the newspaper *Free Russia* (December number, 1895).

that this last qualification more than any other had gained for him the good graces of Pobiedonostseff. And the latter had now become almost sole master in the land.

There were, however, people in Russia who hoped that the new Minister of the Interior would alter to a certain extent the course of affairs. It was known that on one occasion he had expressed his disapproval of the introduction of the "chief of district" system, which hardly left any rights whatever to the peasants; but sight was lost of the fact that his patron, Pobiedonostseff, had at the time also shown himself opposed to the institution in question,[1] so that Gorevykin's opposition to that reactionary institution might well be attributed to the wish to ingratiate himself with his powerful patron. That this opposition was not due to a certain degree of liberalism on the part of the new Minister soon became evident. The nobility in the province of Tver decided on the 28th December, 1895, by two hundred and forty votes against twenty, to lay before the Tsar a complaint against the Governor of Tver because the same had arbitrarily forbidden sixty persons to act as members of the managing board of schools which they themselves had founded and opened. The petition was signed, amongst other persons, by Count Hilkoff, the new Minister of Commerce, and the Governor of Nijni Novgorod, both members of the nobility of Tver, and was handed to the Minister of the Interior for him to forward it to the Tsar. According to Gorevykin's report, the petition was refused, with the remark that it was not the business of the nobility to make petitions on such matters.

The most important events of the year 1896 were the

[1] For what reason the Procurator of the Holy Synod was at the time opposed to a reactionary measure has never been explained. It is assumed that his opposition arose from personal motives that affected either the originator of the proposal, Count Dmitri Tolstoi, or Durnovo, who carried it out.

coronation in Moscow and the great strike in St. Petersburg, where the workers displayed for the first time an energy and solidarity that had not been expected of them. Concerning the coronation very little can be said here. All those who, in spite of the policy of the Government during the past year, had still clung to the illusion that it was not the Tsar, but his advisers, who were to blame for the reactionary measures, hoped that the customary coronation manifesto would make known the decision of the Tsar. But they were deceived again. The expected coronation manifesto was in the main points the same as the one issued on the occasion of the Tsar's marriage. The only ones who received the full and absolute benefit of his grace were those officials who had been accused of misusing their authority. They were all exempted from further unpleasant consequences of their offences, though those who had suffered from the latter had to console themselves and bear their loss as best they could. The political offenders, the exiled and the fugitives, remained in the same position as hitherto. Any mitigation of their fate depended on the Ministry of the Interior, the same department that had brought them to their present misery. The coronation manifesto brought to a definite end all the hopes concerning the gentleness and goodness of heart ascribed in general to the Tsar, who personally contributed to the belief in his kindness being considerably shaken at the time of the coronation. No little stir was created in all circles of society when it became known that the Tsar, on the evening of the frightful catastrophe in which four thousand persons were trodden to death on the field of Chodinsky, had attended the ball given to the French ambassador, and had even taken part in the dances. The great American orator and writer, the late Robert G. Ingersoll, only echoed the sentiments of the whole civilised world when, on alluding to the coronation

he used the following words, which deserve to be quoted: "On reading the descriptions of the coronation of the Tsar, the processions, the ceremonies, and the festivities, the ostentation and parade of the barbarian magnificence, the cloths of gold and the glittering of precious stones, I could not but think of the poor peasants, of the trodden-down, overworked, and half-fed millions, of the gloomy and ignorant masses who belonged body and soul to the Tsar. I thought of the shoulders that had been torn open by the knout, of the thousands of prisoners lingering in cells because they had dared to whisper something about liberty, of the heaps of human beings driven like cattle through the hopeless roads that lead to the hell of Siberia. The cannon did not thunder loud enough, and neither the pealing of the bells nor the blare of trumpets could drown the laments of the prisoners. . . . The coronation is a blemish on the nineteenth century. Long live the Russian people!" Colonel Ingersoll wrote this, however, before the coronation massacre, which did not prevent the Lord's anointed from attending the French ball.

The strike in St. Petersburg in 1896 came to the rulers as a surprise which in every sense was as great as it was unpleasant. Furthermore, until then there had not occurred in Russia any workers' movement in any way approaching that extent: forty-two thousand workers quitted their situations in the factories. This was a greater number than the police and gendarmerie could, as it was thought, possibly cope with, especially as everything tended to show that the strikers and other workers were very well organised, and stood under the command of clever and powerful leaders. The best proof was the fact that sixteen thousand workers engaged at the Putiloff locomotive works and twelve thousand in the Alexandroff works did not come out for a time, though declaring that they did this in order to support the strikers

with their wages, and that later on they would make the same demands on their employers as their brother-workers in factories and establishments, namely, the reduction of the working time to eleven or ten and a half hours and the amelioration of the sanitary conditions in the factories.

The newspapers were, of course, forbidden to publish anything in connection with the whole strike. All meetings of strikers and the collection of funds towards the strike were likewise interdicted. Everything done in this direction had to be effected in a secret manner, lest an opportunity were given to the Government to intervene with arrests, imprisonment, or banishment. Notwithstanding all these admonitions, funds were collected in Russia and several other countries, and the "League for the Independence of the Working Classes" formed; namely, a kind of secret organisation that conducted the strike in St. Petersburg, as well as the labour movement in general.

The demands of the strikers were in no way unreasonable. A few days after the cessation of work they declared themselves satisfied if only the number of working hours were reduced from fourteen to twelve, and payment made for the three coronation days, which had been deducted from their wages. Many of the employers were disposed to comply with these extremely modest demands of the workers, but were distinctly prohibited by the police from so doing.

In view of the approaching celebrations connected with the Tsar's entrance into St. Petersburg, the Government deemed it advisable to use direct force against the strikers, the more so as the movement threatened to spread to other localities. Consequently, the authorities endeavoured to starve them out, and considered it sufficient to have the factories rigorously watched by the police and the constabulary. The arrests of individuals who were thought to be playing a leading part occurred in great numbers, but when the

workers assembled in this or that open space in the town for the purpose of holding a meeting, they were not molested, for the reason that they were too great in number. The fermentation was much too strong to be quelled by the police alone.

Not long afterwards, however, the authorities seemed to have come to the conclusion that starvation was too slow a method. Shortly before the 24th of July the Prefect of the Police in St. Petersburg ordered placards to be affixed on every corner house in that part of the town where the workers lived wherein it was declared that no heed would be taken of the demands and sufferings of the workers until they had returned to their work, and that the proper authorities would then thoroughly investigate all the circumstances that had led to the strike.

This was the first time that the Government and its officials had seen themselves compelled to deal with subjects who had set themselves against their will and orders; it was the first time that the people had received an undeniable proof of the power that they could exercise by joining in a close union. The strike by degrees came to an end, in consequence, as usual, of insufficient funds on the part of the strikers, and without gaining any especial advantage for the workers, though parts of their demands were satisfied. But the indirect gain was the greater because, since realising their power, the workers in St. Petersburg have always endeavoured, by the formation of unions and societies, and by making closer the bonds between them, to create a firmer and more extensive organisation for the purpose of promoting the welfare and defending the rights of all.

The Government, too, seemed to have at last realised the importance of such combinations on a large scale, between the workers and the movement in all labour circles of the Empire, which could even create local strikes. The activity of

the police towards labour circles increased every day in significant proportions. Any person who was suspected of possessing great influence in these circles was placed under police supervision, or simply arrested and exiled by "administrative process." Moreover, the behaviour of the authorities —that is to say, the police and gendarmerie—was becoming gradually so violent as to make the workers receptive, not only of socialistic ideas, but also of all those revolutionary doctrines the teachings of which in some way affected their interests. The working population has therefore, thanks to the short-sightedness of the rulers, become the broad basis upon which the men of progress, the revolutionaries as they are falsely called, now mainly found their hopes. Compared with the fact that the rulers treated the workers on strike as rebels, showing them thereby that the economic problem could only be solved by gaining political rights, it was a matter of little importance that the Government considered it advisable to issue a manifesto to the workers wherein relief was promised, and urging them, at the same time, to live "in accordance with God's truth," that is to say, according to the gospel of the Russian Government.

As characteristic of this regime, mention should be made of the appointment of Lobanoff to the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs, whereby the Government proved that it was *their* policy, and not *his own*, that the Prince had followed as ambassador in Constantinople when he worked against the endeavours of the European Powers to prevent the Turkish atrocities in Armenia. Russia did not want to have "any Armenian Bulgaria," namely, an independent Armenia, which would have proved a barrier to the execution of her plans in Asia Minor. That the Armenians were being slaughtered by the hundred and most cruelly treated by the Kurds and other Mohammedan subjects of Turkey was of

small importance to the Christian Greek-orthodox Government of Russia when compared with their political projects of the future.

To the events of the year 1896 it may be added that the ferment among the young students in St. Petersburg in consequence of their being prohibited from celebrating the annual fête of the university spread to other universities, and reached its highest point in Moscow. There the student societies, called "countrymen's unions" and prohibited by the Government, had formed themselves into one general league, which was compelled to meet in secret places. The delegates were chosen from among the "countrymen's unions," and conducted the affairs of the league and of the other students in general. This body decided, in consequence of the events that had occurred in St. Petersburg, that a great demonstration of students should be made to protest against the reactionary policy of the rulers. After duly discussing the plans, it was resolved that the demonstration should assume the shape of a commemoration service precisely six months from the date on which took place the coronation massacre in the square of Chodinsky. But the police got wind of the affair, and interfered in the usual way as the students were journeying to the Vagankovo cemetery, where the victims of the above-mentioned catastrophe had been buried. The students were driven back to the university by the police, who were assisted by Cossacks, and, as they refused to disperse, were forced into a large military riding school. All their names were taken, and thirty-six of them, whom the police picked out at random as ringleaders, were conveyed to prison. On the following day a larger number of students again assembled at the university, and, through a deputation, asked the rector to effect the release of the students imprisoned the day before. He refused to do so, while the

students on their side, regardless of his warning, declined to disperse, with the result that 403 of them were arrested and transported to the provincial gaol. Of that number 105 were subsequently banished, by "administrative process," to Siberia, whilst twenty-six others were expelled from the university. A few days afterwards an order was issued which provided that students attending meetings or participating in delegations should not only be dismissed from the university, but also banished, by "administrative process," from Moscow.

In such wise did the Government open the battle against the educated youth and the students of Russia. This battle continued and increased in bitterness with every month, until the students at the universities and other high schools openly and fearlessly joined themselves to those who see in political liberty the cure for the social evil which has brought the Russian people to misery and discontent.

In the same year, the Government acted with still greater brutality towards the Duchoborzen on account of their refusal to bear arms. More than 400,000 members of this sect were dragged from the mountain district of the Caucasus, whither they had formerly been sent, to the low-lying land in the province of Tiflis, where they were distributed among the Georgian villages—not more than five families were allowed to live in each village—and could not even talk to their neighbours. Left without any means of subsistence, they had to help themselves as best they could. In the mountains they had had homes of their own, and acquired a certain amount of property, asking for nothing more than to be left in peace. Now they were led from the, comparatively speaking, cool and invigorating climate of the mountains to the hot and unhealthy plains. They were neither permitted to take their belongings with them, nor to assemble in large groups so as to be able to

assist one another. Furthermore, they were forbidden to quit the villages where they had been compelled to settle, and where their sole earnings and means of support consisted of the labour which they performed for the impoverished population of the place. The result was no other than could be expected: despairing want, disease and mortality among the four thousand Duchoborzen, especially among the children, who literally died in heaps. Lest the civilised world should be left in ignorance of this new proof of brutal contempt for all human rights on the part of the Russian Government, Leo Tolstoi and three of his co-religionists made it their business to address an appeal to the Christians in Russia and other countries wherein the undeserved misery of the Duchoborzen was faithfully depicted. The appeal brought assistance for the victims from all quarters, and resulted in their going over to Canada in great numbers. But of the three men who had signed the appeal with Tolstoi two were arrested and exiled, whilst the third one succeeded in fleeing to England.

At the beginning of 1897 *Free Russia* gave particulars of the result, peculiar and unexpected, though perhaps not quite unwelcome to the authorities, of the brandy monopoly which had recently been introduced in some of the provinces. In these provinces, the badly paid teachers of the country and primary schools left their posts in large numbers and accepted positions as managers of the Government taverns, where the rate of pay was much better. At that time the pernicious effects of the brandy monopoly had already commenced to show themselves by the large increase in the consumption. Everywhere taverns were opened in the name and on the behalf of the Government where formerly none had existed, and drunkenness amongst the peasants naturally increased in the same proportion as poverty and disease. After it had become impossible for the peasants, thanks to

the crack-brained protective duties, to buy the necessary articles for the improvement of agriculture, the reactionary regime made it its business to cheat them of the money which had been left to them after the payment of duties, taxes, and usury interest.

The Russian press, by publishing the news of the change in the employment of the teachers, might have shed some light on the true significance of the phenomenon even without making any comment upon it. The censorship had become sharper than ever, every word which might have been taken as a criticism of the Government or its subordinate officials being suppressed. But, notwithstanding all this, writers and journals could here and there communicate facts which, though no personal expression of opinion were made, could elucidate many matters. For instance, the *Juriditscheshia Gaseta* published in 1897 an article by Senator Tagantseff about the method applied by the Government (and still adhered to) for transferring all cases in which one or other of the rulers wished for a sentence of death from the usual and lawful courts to the military court. Of course the senator dared not criticise this method directly, but only observed that every governor-general had the right to transfer such judicial cases, showing as a statistically substantiated fact that in the period of fifteen years 1876-91 not less than two hundred and eighty-two persons had been executed in pursuance of such military court verdicts, amongst whom one hundred and twenty were in military employment, mostly soldiers, and one hundred and seventy-two civilians. Now if one considers that nearly all the victims were persons who, according to Russian law, could not even be condemned to death by the judge,[1] and that the animosity of the rulers had only been

[1] Excepting those who, directly or indirectly, had participated in attempts against the life of the Tsar, the number of whom, however, did not amount to more than twenty in the period given.

incurred by their attempts to disseminate amongst the ignorant people the knowledge of rights belonging to every man *quâ* man; if one considers that they had been in some cases driven to self-defence and had met force with force; comparing their treatment with justice and all that appertains to it, one may well find in the article of Senator Tagantseff material for more books than one about the atrocities of the then and even now prevailing regime.

Not less instructive, although in quite another direction, was another article which was published about the same time, and also with the consent of the censor, in the *Financial Messenger*, concerning the protective policy of the Russian Finance Minister. The article was by no means critical in tone. It only spoke about the fact that the Government, "to encourage national industries," had transferred all Government orders for iron and steel products to home manufacturers, of course at prices which the manufacturers were able to fix with regard to the unduly heavy protective duties. Business with the Government was by far the most profitable for the industrial masters, in that the Russian Government, which constructs its railways, shipping of every kind, etc., itself, is by far the largest consumer of iron and steel in the whole Empire. For this reason, the largest manufacturers did not trouble themselves about the private consumption, and consequently there could not be any competition worth the name for so meeting this demand as to influence the protective duties. The latter increased the price of industrial products to such an unreasonable extent that, for instance, cast iron realised 300 per cent. more than in Germany or England, whilst the price for tools and other articles manufactured in Russia for which cast iron was used quite naturally increased still more. Instead of increasing in proportion to the extension of civilisation, as was the case with the demand for iron in all civilised countries, it actually

decreased in Russia, taken per head of the population. The article in question stated that the consumption of iron in Russia during fifteen years had increased from 302,000,000 to 461,000,000 poods, but it did not mention that this increase barely corresponded with the increase of population; still less did it mention that this increase for several years was to be attributed to the construction of the Siberian Railway, for which enormous quantities of iron were required. After deducting the demands of this railway from the total quantity of the consumption of iron, it could be proved that the people themselves consumed comparatively a small quantity of iron, or, in other words, that the consuming power was continually decreasing, whilst poverty, on the other hand, was increasing. One must read either between or behind the lines to be able to understand the full meaning of the statistical publication allowed by the censor.[1]

Another highly instructive statistical statement is the one published by the Russian press in the autumn of 1897 with regard to the number of pupils demanding admission and those admitted in the various high public schools of the Empire. At the university of Kieff 450 young men belonging to the orthodox faith were accepted, that is to say nearly all that had applied, though out of a total of eighty candidates only forty-five Jews were admitted. The Polytechnic Institute in Riga agreed to take only 7½ per cent. of the Jewish students that had applied. The endeavour to deprive the Jews as much as possible of every opportunity to acquire culture and knowledge was carried on with still greater zeal, and with a cynicism as bitter as it was imprudent. A convincing proof

[1] The author would find it an easy task to collect from the material placed at his disposal sufficient facts to fill two or three volumes illustrating the development of the reactionary regime and its results under the present Tsar. But, in order to anticipate the objection that these facts are not confirmed, it is advisable to introduce only those which have not even been suppressed by the Russian censorship and are actually extracts from the official statistics.

of this is the reply that a number of wealthy Jewish merchants of the town of Berditscheff, the population of which consists of four-fifths Jews, received on their requesting the Minister of Education to grant a larger sum for the foundation of a higher school in the town mentioned, which the petitioners promised to maintain in future. The Minister declared himself willing, in the name of the Government, to accept the generous offer, but on the condition that only one-twentieth of the pupils should be Jewish, that is to say, 5 per cent., whilst the inhabitants of the town consisted of 80 per cent. of Jews! The offer was withdrawn.

In the religious direction also there are sufficient proofs that the spirit of Pobiedonostseff is still as dominant as ever. In August, 1897, there assembled in Kasan, under the auspices of the Holy Synod, a congress of two hundred priests, teachers in clerical seminaries and Church schools, to discuss ways and means to meet the spread of sectarianism. From the official report about the discussions and resolutions of the congress it appears, firstly, that Stundism and other cognate heresies were still spreading, notwithstanding the powerful means employed by the authorities; and, secondly, that the orthodox priesthood was willing to go still further in the persecution of Dissenters than Pobiedonostseff's Government.

The Stundists, since it was forbidden to them to hold prayer-meetings, had begun to visit Lutheran churches wherever such were to be found, and the Lutheran clergy had assisted them by holding divine service in the Russian language. The congress consequently resolved that an order should be issued prohibiting the Lutheran clergy from rendering assistance of this kind, and furthermore determined to place a petition before the Government to the effect that the Tolstoians, the followers of Leo Tolstoi, should be declared by law to be a sect "specially dangerous to the Church and State," in order that this new sect, like those of a similar

category, should be exterminated by fire and sword. With regard to the "Old Believers" and other sectarians of a less dangerous kind, the congress resolved to take steps to declare these Dissenting views on religion as "blasphemy," so as to enable the *mirs* (village communes) to exercise the right of banishing members of the various sects as "blasphemous" members of the community to Siberia. It was also decreed that the publication of books of Lutheran liturgy should be declared "dangerous"—*i.e.*, prohibited; that sectarians should be forbidden to employ as servants and workmen any minors who were of the Greek orthodox faith; and that adult sectarians should be placed under the special supervision of the orthodox priests. Finally, the congress requested that the law which decreed punishment for the "open" defence of sectarian doctrines should be amended by the omission of the term "open," so that the law could be more rigorously applied. All these resolutions were passed unanimously. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that the Procurator of the Holy Synod, the soul and the leading spirit of reaction, took care that the petitions of the congress had the required result, by which the numerous Russian sectarians of various religious shades were placed in an even worse position than formerly.

By the end of 1897 a new famine had begun in Russia, if possibly worse than the one of 1891—92, and the policy of the Government towards the people was the same now as then. In the autumn the Minister of Agriculture stated that sixteen provinces had already suffered want in consequence of the total failure of the harvest, amongst the number being fourteen of those provinces which suffered most in 1891-92, and were still suffering from the consequence of that famine. They, of course, required assistance first of all, though the Government was of an opposite opinion. The assembly of *zemstvos* in Voronesch had instituted a thorough

inquiry into the state of affairs in that town, and, in view of the result of the same, had requested a larger loan from the public funds, to enable them to buy the necessary food, fodder for cattle, etc. But the Government refused; firstly because the *zemstvo* meeting had not taken into consideration the value of such property as draught cattle, harness, and accessories of all kinds, which the peasants could eventually sell; secondly because not more than a ninth part had been paid back of that aid which the population of that province had received during the first famine. That the results of the harvest in the years lying between these years had been too bad to make a repayment possible was not taken into account. The only thing the rulers did at the beginning was to order the rate collectors to use no forcible means (beating) against defaulting peasants in the districts affected by the bad harvest.

Under the heading of the events of the year 1897 must also be mentioned a letter from Leo Tolstoi with regard to the treatment of the sectarians published in the *Petersburgskia Viedomosti*, the editor of which, Prince Uchtomsky, had, in consequence of his connections with the Tsar, fortunately escaped the reprimand of the censor in this instance. The letter referred to the kidnapping of the children of the sectarians, a kind of persecution which had happened before, though not to such a large extent as in the year mentioned; and ran as follows:

"At the end of April last several members of the Molokane sect came to me with the request that I should help them in their distress. In two of their villages, Semlianka and Antonofka, in the district of Bousouluk, five children, varying in age from two to eleven years, were taken away from their parents in virtue of Article 39 of the legal code. The Molokanes addressed petitions to all the authorities; I also did for them what I could; but our united efforts came

to nothing. Towards the middle of September these persons again came to me and prayed that I should in some way or another help to have their children restored to them. At the same time there was a controversy in the newspapers as to whether the congress of priests at Kasan had passed a resolution inducing the Government to deprive sectarians and Dissenters of their children. Some newspapers positively declared that a proposal of that kind had been made, and condemned it most severely, whilst others warmly defended the members of the congress, and denied the possibility of such a proposal. From these discussions Russian society, as well as strangers interested in the question of the relations between the Government and the sects, must have been drawn to the conclusion that, although we cannot as yet boast of full religious toleration, such harsh measures as the separation of children from their parents could not be thought of among Russians, since the mention of the mere possibility of such a step has created general indignation in the liberal and the most conservative and orthodox newspapers. Yet not only the Molokanes, but, as I know, many other sectarians, are robbed of their children; and this is done in virtue of the law according to Article 39,[1] so that the members of the congress need not have asked for it. As the matter stands it is of no use to argue about something that already exists both in theory and practice."

It must be added that this form of persecution is excused by the "necessity" of taking away the children from the pernicious influence of their sectarian parents and giving them an orthodox education. This excuse is based on a circular of the Minister of the Interior, Gorevykin, who recommended the measure on the strength of the article of law mentioned.

At the commencement of 1898 two changes in the Ministry

[1] The article deals with the prevention of crimes.

took place. The Minister of Education, Delianoff, died, and was replaced by Bogoliepoff, one of the most obsequious creatures of Pobiedonostseff, while, in succession to Vannofsky, General Kuropatkin was chosen as Minister of War. He was an uneducated *parvenu*, who had recommended himself to the reactionary rulers by his servility far more than by proved skill and merit. These appointments in the regime caused no other change than a further severity of method.

At the beginning of this year another letter of Leo Tolstoi is dated, an appeal for aiding the peasants suffering from famine, whom the Government had left to help themselves as best they could. In this letter Tolstoi says, amongst other things:—

"In the province of Voronesch the distress is dreadful. All grain is nearly used up, though the stock of cabbage and potatoes will last for some time yet. Stores have been opened so that the people can buy necessaries at cheap prices, but food cannot be procured, and the customers have no money to buy, even at a low price. In consequence of the bad harvest of the last autumn they only earned the lowest of wages. They have been obliged to sacrifice all their household goods, and at present the unfortunate people can only offer their clothes in exchange for food. Whilst a cow can be bought for ten roubles, rye meal is for the greatest part mixed with offals, and quoted at a prohibitive price. In places near the railway money can save the lives of many, but to the population of remote districts even the most liberal gifts can be of little use. Thousands must perish without the possibility of rescue."

The most sensational of all publications in the said year was the so-called peace manifesto of the Tsar, proposing that the Powers should come to an agreement to diminish the annually increasing armaments. There were, indeed, in

several parts of the world people who believed that the Russian Tsar had the intention of placing himself at the head of a great peace movement emanating from the Governments, and not from the peoples. These credulous persons were soon cured of this error by another manifesto in which the Tsar summoned the Finnish Assembly to an extraordinary sitting to deliberate about an Imperial proposal which would considerably increase the Finnish army. The announcement at first created a deeper impression abroad than at home; for so glaringly was it at variance with the intentions expressed in the peace and disarmament manifesto that the latter was generally believed to feign sentiments which its author did not entertain at all; unless, indeed, the Tsar had not even understood what was contained in the "military reform" which he had dared to put before the Finnish people.

In this country there could not be left the least doubt, as soon as the contents of the Emperor's legislative project had in the main become known, but that the Government was now seriously determined on the Russification of the Finnish Grand Duchy. Shortly afterwards the appointment to the governor-generalship of General Bobrikoff, an unprincipled adventurer, who, properly speaking, was wholly ignorant of active military service, confirmed the fears which had been occasioned by the summoning of the extraordinary Assembly.

A great surprise in the civilised world was also created by the emigration *en masse* of the Duchoborzen in 1898. During the short period in which part of them had been compelled to reside in the government of Tiflis 1,200 persons, mostly children, out of a number of about 4,500 individuals, had died through disease and privation. The remainder had been brought to a point of desperation which would have stopped at nothing to escape persecution—at nothing short of forswearing their religion. On this score the tools of the

Government were powerless against them, although in other respects they were peaceful and yielding. All imaginable measures of violence had been tried, but without success, and at last the rulers were compelled to give in and to allow the Duchoborzen to emigrate. Altogether eight thousand of them were sent in parties to Canada, where they obtained land from the Government, and where several colonies of Duchoborzen seem to be in a good way to gain larger prosperity than they ever dreamed of at home. But not all of them were allowed to emigrate. Those who had reached the age for military service were, on refusing to bear arms, sent to the north into the Polar regions of Siberia, and this for the whole term of service in the active army and reserve, or eighteen years in all.

The conscript Duchoborzen were looked upon as disaffected and hostile to the Government, and treated accordingly. On this point just as much as on any other the rulers had not changed their methods. Revolutionary acts of violence or even attempts at conspiracy had not occurred for several years. It is true that the police now and then reported discoveries of plots and intended attempts, but their reports were hardly believed by anybody, except perhaps by the Tsar, who would hardly have been so ready to sanction the policy of violence of the ruling cabal if he had known the truth. For none of these "revolutionaries," who were arrested wholesale, had even thought about an attempt upon his holy person; they were in most cases students agitating against the unbearable university rules, or workmen who tried to bring about combination and organisation among their comrades for the promotion of their general interests.

During the year 1898 a distinct increase in the activity of the police and gendarmerie could be observed. Within ten months over a thousand male and female persons were arrested, partly boys and girls who were far from being grown up, all

"for political reasons." In January domiciliary visits were paid and wholesale arrests were made in the government of Saratoff, being repeated in February at Nikolaieff, a town on the Black Sea, and at Ivanovo-Vosnessemsk, where seventy workmen were arrested; in March in St. Petersburg, Kieff, (seventy arrests), Moscow (thirty men and women arrested), and Saratoff; and in April again at St. Petersburg and Odessa, where thirty-two persons of both sexes were arrested at the same time. In the following months the campaign was continued at Vitebsk, Wilna (thirty to forty arrested in both places), at Kaluga, Warsaw, and Lodz, where no less than two hundred workmen were arrested at the same time. The gaols in Voronesch, Kieff, Odessa, and other provincial towns were filled with political "prisoners" who were punished by administrative process or were kept in solitary confinement, whilst twenty others were on their way to Siberia, all by order of the Chief of the Police or the Minister of the Interior at St. Petersburg. There was no question whatever about a trial of the political criminals; the administrative justice—*sit venia verbo!*—was, and remains to the present day, the only one. In the prisons of St. Petersburg alone there were in September, 1898, one hundred and seventeen men and thirty-three women, fifteen of the former in the Peter and Paul fortress, who had never been before a judge for examination and much less convicted, but who were nevertheless considered dangerous criminals.

The preponderating part of these prisoners were workmen who had done nothing worse than having tried to form trade unions for the purpose of bettering the miserable conditions under which they worked and lived, conditions which even the higher Government functionaries acknowledged—if not in public, at least in their official reports to the Tsar—as impossible to last.

Especially instructive as to the results of the Government

policy and interesting on account of its frankness is a secret report to the Tsar communicated at this period by the Governor-General of Poland, Prince Imeretinsky. How a copy of this report, so disagreeable for the ruling cabal, got into meddlesome hands cannot here be related; but there is no question either as to its authenticity or that Prince Imeretinsky painted the conditions in dark colours. He began with the assertion that the revolutionary spirit in Poland was just as strong as during the insurrection of 1863, notwithstanding all that had been done to prevent it, and that the Government could not suppress it. The Prince further declared that the Russian Government officials in Poland (no Poles were admitted) were only "half educated, not very intelligent, awkward, indifferent, lazy, uncivil, and rough in their behaviour," and that they ought to be better educated and better paid, so that the Poles might learn to respect the Russian Government. He next emphasised in the report the necessity of Polish instruction in all schools, demanding the admission of Roman Catholic priests to give religious instruction in the schools, and the foundation of Polish libraries in the whole country. Only by adopting these measures, the Prince asserted, could feelings of loyalty and fidelity to the Russian Government be awakened in the Poles. In still sharper terms was the Polish position in Poland described in the report. It was stated that the peasants had not enough land for their support, the Government had none for them, and the ground landlords would not sell any. "The consequence is," the report goes on, "that there is general dissatisfaction, and that the revolutionary movement is spreading among the people who formerly had abstained from politics. At the same time, the trade union ideas from the West are gaining ground among the factory workpeople, who are groaning beneath antiquated laws, which might possibly do for Russia but are not sufficient for Poland."

It appears from the whole report, although not expressed in so many words, that Prince Imeretinsky considered the policy of the Government in Poland a failure in every respect, as it had created a deplorable state of affairs in all departments. This document, which was at the time commented upon by the *Times*, is of great value as a basis for judging the fruits of the reactionary Government in general, because the above proves clearly enough that the conditions in Russia were in no respect better, but in economic respects even worse, than in Poland.

The attitude of the Russian Government and the actions of its tools in the year following the ascension of the throne by Nicholas II. had gradually convinced the world that the Tsar had become a puppet in the hands of the cabal which was in the main inspired and led by Pobiedonostseff. It was soon enough seen that the peace manifesto, taken up in the beginning with so much enthusiasm and applause, was a game with which the Ministers suitably entertained the Tsar whilst they were following up their reactionary purpose to the bitter end. Now and again the public tried to hold on to the hope that Nicholas II. would enter upon a new course which would in time also be felt in Russia, but with every passing month this hope became more and more evanescent. Finally even the most sanguine came to a clear perception as to the state of affairs through the notorious Finnish manifesto of the 15th of February, 1899, when the Tsar recklessly broke his promise to uphold immutably the rights and privileges of Finland. There was not an honest and disinterested paper in the whole civilised world which did not show this breach of his word in the proper light, hardly one which did not openly say that the Tsar had hereby put an end to all the hopes of any result accruing from the peace conference called together by his disarmament manifesto, because he had made it impossible

for everybody to place any confidence whatever in his engagements.

As if all this had not been enough, the police immediately afterwards arranged in St. Petersburg a cold-blooded and deliberate flogging of students, being provided for the occasion with knouts, which are not included in the regulation equipment of Russian policemen. A cry of exasperation went forth over this brutality through the whole of educated Russia as well as the educated population of the rest of the world. The Tsar and the Russian Government, however, were not affected by this; on the contrary, the Prefect of Police of St. Petersburg, who had ordered this beating, was rewarded for his zeal in the service of the autocracy.

The students held numerously attended indignation meetings to consider how they might obtain satisfaction. At one of these meetings the rector of the university rose and made a speech in which he admitted that the police had acted unlawfully and brutally; but he declared at the same time that there was no lawful way to act against the police, and that he was not convinced, although he had sent a complaint about the affair to the Ministry of the Interior, that the guilty would not receive a reward instead of being punished! In view of the state of affairs, he admonished the students to remain quiet and to undertake nothing. But they did not keep quiet. They resolved, on the contrary, to stay away from the lectures, and this resolve was followed by so many students of other universities and high schools of the Empire that the number of the strikers rose in a short time to 13,000 students of both sexes.

This strike created a great sensation in the whole of Russia, and gave rise to discussions for and against this strike which had the result of showing why the authorities of St. Petersburg had resolved upon and carried out the attack on the students. Some time ago there had been a talk of abandoning the state of

siege in the capital, which disquieted a great number of higher and lower officials, who would have either lost their employment or part of their incomes if this should have happened. To them a student riot would have been very opportune, because it would have given a pretence to uphold the state of siege. But the students did not fall into the trap. Not even at their indignation meetings did they go further than whistling and hooting at their rector. And when the latter had gone, having previously told them that all students who attended this meeting would be prosecuted according to criminal law, they contented themselves with tearing up the placard upon which the rector's warning was printed. Those who lived on that side of the Neva on which the university stands, which was the case with most of them, arrived safely home; but the others, who had to cross the river, found the ice broken up, and the nearest bridge occupied by a strong detachment of police. They now proceeded, accompanied by a crowd of curious people, to another bridge, but on the way thither were literally pounced upon by the police, who followed them. The majority of the attacked consisted of members of wealthy families, amongst others five sons of Imperial Senators, and, thanks to this circumstance and the great extent to which the strike increased, the result was that the Tsar heard of the affair. He gave orders to General Vannofsky to investigate the matter after it had been discussed in the Council of Ministers, at which the Minister of Finance, De Witte, supported by several of his colleagues, had voted for an inquiry, while Pobiedonostseff, Gorevykin, and Bogoliepoff (the Minister of Education) voted against it.

Whilst Vannofsky was making his arrangements to start his inquiry, the Chief of Police, preserving the utmost secrecy, had those students arrested and deported who could have given damning evidence, and also those who were known to have

been the leaders of the united organisation of the students. For safety's sake, however, deputies had been chosen for all members of the organisation committee, who could therefore continue their activity in spite of the arrests. In one of the hectographed circulars issued by this committee, they state, among other things: "We consider the present circumstances as the fruits of the system prevailing in Russia, which is founded on arbitrary force, suppression of freedom of speech, and abolition of the most elementary and holiest rights of individual development. Our protest is, therefore, directed against this regime of force and misuse of power, against which there is no other security but the law and its inviolability." In another paragraph of the circular the authors of the same say: "Avoiding all restricted party points of view, we have given this movement a generally social and really political character."

This was the first time that the students made a stand against the autocratic system, but it was by no means the last time. The sympathies of society were, with the exception of the bureaucracy, altogether on their side, and rose in the same proportion as the strike in the better high schools. But notwithstanding and in spite of the first impulse of the Tsar to do the students justice, and notwithstanding the proposition of Vannofsky, after having finished his investigation, to grant the students a larger amount of independence and extended rights, the Emperor again acceded to the views which were advanced by the leaders of reaction, Pobiedonostseff and the Ministers of the Interior and Public Instruction. An Imperial ukase was promulgated declaring clearly and distinctly that students who should in future be found guilty of participation in a "strike" would be put into the army to learn obedience and discipline. That the ukase was not merely a threat is well known, but it is also notorious that this new unique brutality, far from "appeasing" the students,

had the opposite effect in driving the majority of them into the ranks of the revolutionaries.

This "reform" in the rules of discipline in the university caused great bitterness in all educated circles of Russia, especially as its provisions were first enforced against several of the most prominent professors of various universities who had become known for their liberal views. No less than ten professors of the university of Moscow were dismissed. Four from the university of St. Petersburg participated in the same fate, and the same number from other high schools. Such measures and ordinances could not fail to open the eyes of the whole of Russian society to the fact that from the Tsar personally absolutely nothing could be expected; that he could not for a moment free himself from the views of despotic bureaucratism, but in all matters would carry out the latter's will.

A further proof of this fact came to hand, when the students' strike began, by a secret report sent by the Governor-General of the Caucasus, Prince Galitzin, to the Tsar, who inserted marginal notes in the report, which, together with the document itself, were published in the London *Times*. In this report, Galitzin, after a governor-generalship of twelve months, speaks about the situation in the province, names the measures which he had taken for the purpose of "improving" this situation, and proposes further reforms in the same spirit. He had been especially struck by the distinct national spirit which animated the Armenians who lived in his district, and which must, in the opinion of the Prince, be considered a danger worthy of notice to the Russian Government. Galitzin found proofs of the presence of such a separatist national spirit in the charity institutions, schools, etc., which the Armenian nationality had founded and maintained out of its own funds; and the best way of opposing this national spirit was, as he thought, to place these institutions under the direct

control of the Russian Government. For this reason, he also depicted in the most brilliant colours the effect of the decree of the Tsar of the 14th of June, 1897, relating to the placing of the schools of the Armenian Church communities under the Ministry of Public Instruction, and reported that, in conformity with this decree, 320 Armenian schools had been closed on the ground of the priests' refusal to submit to the orders of the decree, whilst 31 were still open. "But," the report continues, "some of these were later on closed for all that, either in consequence of the incompetency of the teachers, or because the clergy refused the funds for their maintenance on the instructions of the Patriarch. In the Imperial decree of the 17th of June, 1897, it is true, nothing has yet been said on this head, that is to say, about the transfer of the property of the Armenian Church schools also; but this was considered to be a matter of course, as the schools would be useless without means for their maintenance. I have, therefore, petitioned your Majesty to sanction the transfer of the property of the closed Armenian schools to the Ministry of Public Instruction, and am awaiting further instructions."

In other words, the Armenian people, who had had the misfortune to be placed under the administration of Prince Galitzin, were robbed not only of their educational establishments, which they themselves had founded and maintained, but also of their property in the same, and all this on grounds of the most cynical arbitrariness which can be imagined. The Tsar, however, deigned to honour the report of Prince Galitzin about the atrocities with a marginal note, which read, "This is the proper way of acting." And the Prince's proposal to suppress part of the Armenian benevolent societies because they "manifested a restricted national spirit" was approved in principle by the Tsar by the comment: "Deserves to be carefully considered."

The proof of the sympathies of the Emperor towards reaction which is furnished by these marginal notes to the report of Prince Galitzin was no longer a surprise to the world. His refusal in March, 1899, to accept the petition, signed by half a million of men, which was brought by a deputation of five hundred Finns to St. Petersburg, together with the stupidly worded reply to this deputation and the uncivil way in which he treated them and allowed those to be treated who represented the highest culture of the civilised world, and who had begged for an audience in the summer to appeal to him in the most polite form in favour of Finland, had already convinced every thinking being that the personal influence of autocracy had fallen below zero.

In November, 1899, the Minister of the Interior, Gorevykin, whose position had for some time been uncertain in consequence of his ineptitude in the campaign against the students and his endeavour to mislead the Tsar with regard to the extension of the famine, was dismissed. In addition to this, it was later on discovered that behind the violent attacks on the Minister of Finance, De Witte, which had appeared in the journal *Russky Trud*, there stood one of the higher censorship officials, a subordinate of Gorevykin, and it was presumed that the attacks had appeared with the full concurrence of the Minister of the Interior. This De Witte used to his advantage with such success that Gorevykin was ousted and was replaced by D. S. Sipiagin.

The *Russky Trud* was suppressed for ever, but its editor was not to be silenced, and addressed a letter to the Imperial Comptroller, Philipoff, in which he publicly accused De Witte of participation in a huge fraud, which had shortly before been discovered, together with remissness in financial management. From the long letter the following extract deserves, according to *Free Russia*, to be mentioned:—

"From the enclosed copy of the *Russky Trud* your

Excellency can see—(1) that our country is confronted with a very serious economical and financial crisis, caused by the intentionally misleading policy of the Finance Minister, which has already brought about a tightness in the money market. This policy is not only unable to avert the mischief, but contributes to its increase by continuing on the same lines, and by the lying explanations which are supplied in the official reports. We actually stand on the brink of State bankruptcy. (2) That the Minister of Finance, in order to be able to continue his policy and to mislead both public opinion and Government circles, uses direct bribery in the shape of extravagant Government advertisements. (3) That the frauds of Maksimoff & Co. were committed with the knowledge of the Finance Minister, and perhaps even under his direction.

"Your Excellency has been placed in the high position of State Comptroller by the law and the confidence of two emperors, to watch over the life of the State. I fear, however, that your Excellency does not realise how widely the present evil has been spread. Only a slight investigation of facts and figures shows that the conduct of the Imperial Bank and Treasury is criminal, and that its director does not serve Russia by any means. Your Excellency, there are times when silence is impossible. Such a time we are now passing through. It is time that the name of De Witte were connected with the names of Mamontoff and Maksimoff.[1] Public opinion and the public conscience have already done it. It is time that you follow the example."

As Sharapoff was not sent to Siberia for his letter of indictment, it may be presumed that its contents were fairly

[1] Mamontoff was a well-known speculator, who was proved to be involved in extensive frauds and embezzlements; Maksimoff was chief of the railway department of the Finance Ministry, which post he had to leave on account of participation in the transactions of the former.

accurate. But De Witte was not dismissed; he was considered indispensable in his post, which he occupies up to this day.

In 1899 several cases of police outrage took place against the students of St. Petersburg, of the same kind as those previously described. With ever increasing frequency the governors and police prefects had the people beaten by Cossacks, sometimes for one reason and sometimes for another, in most cases only to prove how energetically order was kept up and how necessary were the officials in their posts.

One of the most remarkable events of the year 1900 was the treatment of Leo Tolstoi by the Holy Synod, who made it known that he would not be buried according to the orthodox ceremonial if he died impenitent. Compared with this, all other proofs of the continuance of the reaction were insignificant. Chastisement of the people became constantly more common, the misery amongst the masses constantly more extended, while amongst the industrial labourers, who had gradually got into trouble through the mad finance and Custom policy, poverty increased in equal ratio.

The unfair protective duties had actually been able to bring about an important industrial development, which was constantly quoted as a proof of the economical prosperity of Russia. This prosperity, however, is fictitious. In most cases foreign capital is invested in Russian industries, and this capital has only been allured to Russia through the high tariff, which in the end is paid by the consumers, the masses, themselves. At first nearly all the industrial concerns paid such incredibly high dividends that companies and private individuals devoted themselves to industrial activity in ever multiplying numbers. But since there was no possibility of exporting the surplus which the home market could not consume (since the effect of this insane political economy on

the majority of the population, the agricultural classes, was continually to diminish the consuming power of that majority), the day was sure to come when work in most of the factories would have at least to be temporarily restricted. To this point Russian industries had already come during the last decade, and the masses of workmen of the new industry were hereby placed in a most awkward position. Badly paid as a rule, under unbearable conditions with regard to the length of the working days as well as the possibility of preserving their common interests, the workmen could do nothing to secure themselves against unfortunate eventualities. The immediate result was severe suffering, and when the workmen tried to act together to obtain relief, they were at once treated as rebels and rioters. Conflicts with the police were of daily occurrence in the years after 1898, and they always ended in wholesale flogging and arrests, with imprisonment and banishment, or even in hanging.

In July and September, 1900, not less than nine Polish leaders of the socialistic workmen's movement were brought before a court-martial by order of the Governor-General and condemned to death. Not even according to the extremely elastic Article 249 of the Russian criminal law, previously mentioned, could they have been condemned. For this reason, these cases were transferred to the military courts, by order of the same Governor-General, Prince Imeretinsky, whose secret proposal to the Tsar to enter upon a liberal policy in Poland has been described before. As his proposition was not approved of, he had changed his principles, and had applied the system with even greater inhumanity than had any other of its representatives.

The implication of Russia in the Chinese troubles of the year in question produced manifold proofs of the impossibility of this system, and how difficult it was for a centralised bureaucracy to secure even a semblance of order as soon as

any extraordinary demands were made upon its resources. The mobilisation of troops, which had just been concentrated in the districts bordering on China in the eventuality of a war in Eastern Asia, was attended by such lamentable results that the troops engaged in the war had to be supplemented and reinforced with extreme haste by detachments taken from the various army corps stationed in European Russia; and in order not to allow the rest of the world to get a glimpse into the rotten condition of Russian army organisation great care was taken not to send entire units of troops to Eastern Asia. It was considered sufficient to collect soldiers and officers here and there from different battalions and regiments, and thus, collectively, Russia found a very strong force, though only after the troops, not only in the eastern governments, but also in the greater part of Siberia, had been mobilised—on paper.

The financial administration was just as little able to meet the strain of extraordinary demands. The war had not lasted many weeks before the Minister of Finance found himself compelled to increase the taxes on tobacco, alcohol, etc., and also to deduct, for military requirements, a certain percentage of the salaries of Government officials, to postpone a great part of the public works, and to forestall the sums granted for public education. People could not help asking themselves what would be the effects of a real war on the finances of Russia when this comparatively insignificant dispute with China had already caused so much embarrassment.

Towards the end of 1900 further conflicts on a large scale broke out between the students and the authorities at Kieff and St. Petersburg. In the former place the origin of the trouble was the assembly of about 1,000 students to deliberate as to what action should be taken in connection with a paltry case of theft committed by two students, and to inquire how

it was that so much demoralisation had crept in among student circles. All the speakers concurred in the opinion that the demoralising and tyrannous policy displayed towards the universities had brought the spirit of the latter to such a low level as to render possible such an offence, which had never happened before. These remarks were, of course, considered contumacious by the authorities, and a number of the students—thirty-seven—who had taken part in the meeting were sentenced to various forms of disciplinary punishment.

The students, however, took upon themselves to protest against this proceeding and called a second private meeting, at which five hundred of them were present. The meeting resolved to invite the rector to appear and listen to their grievances, but he refused to come, appealing instead to the gendarmerie, whose commander, General Novitsky, previously mentioned, attended, accompanied by the Governor, the Chief of Police, a swarm of subordinate officials, and a sotnia of Cossacks. The students received him with the utmost politeness, and their correct attitude induced the General to send for the rector, who, however, still refused to give heed to the demands of the students. The spokesman of the latter stated that after the Christmas holidays another strike of students would be declared, which would also probably spread to the other high schools. He besought the students to hold firmly to their demands, and to support the movement, even if he (the speaker) should have been meanwhile arrested.

On the next day the five hundred participators in the meeting were brought before the special commission provided for such cases, and one hundred and eighty-three of their number were sentenced to be drafted into the army as common soldiers, while the rest were expelled from the university. Shortly after this eighty-two students left the

university of St. Petersburg, while, at the same time, twenty-five[1] more were made common soldiers. The Pobiedonostseff Government, with the Tsar, Nicholas II., its chief in name, had definitely degraded the army to the level of a penitentiary. This humiliation was so much the greater for the army in that the "punished" were only guilty of a crime for which even the Russian courts would have imposed a fine of ten roubles at the utmost, whereas now the authorities thrust upon the officers of the army a kind of provost-marshalship for the purpose of executing their capriciously rigorous sentences.

The most remarkable part of this business is that the Chief of the Gendarmerie himself, General Novitsky, opposed the drafting of the hundred and eighty-three students into the army, as did also the representative of the Minister of War; while, on the other hand, the rector of the university, together with the "curator," voted for this method of punishment, and was backed by Bogoliepoff, the Minister of Education.

The prediction that the movement among the Kieff students would soon extend to other university towns was speedily realised. At Moscow, Kharkoff, and St. Petersburg, demonstrations of the students at the different high schools took place in February, 1901, when the motion was put for the abolition of the "temporary regulations" (the ukase referring to the drafting of the students into the soldiery). The Moscow demonstrators, along with a crowd of spectators, were hustled into the big military riding-school near the university, and were there so roughly handled by the police and Cossacks that several of them had to be removed in

[1] The correspondent of the *Times* places their number at two hundred and three, but the writer prefers to adhere to the lower figure. It is more than big enough. The statement respecting those who were drafted into the army at Kieff is taken from the official reports in the *Government Messenger*.

ambulances. Some of the wounded died shortly after. The particular cause of this savagery on the part of the police and Cossacks was that a number of workmen had hastened to the assistance of the prisoners,[1] and had smashed doors and windows in order to effect an entrance. Even the very police understood what this meant. The time was gone by when they could set the common folk to harry the educated youth under the pretext that these young men were hostile to the Tsar. At Kharkoff the students fixed their demonstrative protest against the "temporary regulations" for the anniversary of the emancipation of the peasants. They attended, in great numbers and in a perfectly orderly manner, Divine service in the St. Nicholas Cathedral, but when, at the conclusion of the service, the prayers for the Imperial family were about to be offered, the students left and, assembling in the square facing the cathedral, started a revolutionary song on their way back to the university. There they were attacked by a company of Cossacks, who made a liberal use of the knout and arrested about seventy of the demonstrators. During the afternoon the demonstration was continued in one of the principal streets of the city, when the workmen associated in crowds with the students and paraded the streets with them, accompanied by thousands of spectators. The Cossacks and the police again attacked with knout and sword, but this time the workmen in particular made a sharp fight of it, so much so that the military proper had to be called out in order to disperse the crowd. More than a hundred students were arrested.

The worst affair, however, was that which occurred in St. Petersburg, where the students held a meeting on the same day in front of the Kasan Church. The police had got wind of their intention and arranged things deliberately so as to be able to surround the demonstrators. The Prefect of Police,

[1] They were kept eighteen hours in the riding school without food or drink

General Kleigels (Clayhills), on horseback, took personal command of the police and Cossacks, and allowed both students and spectators to be handled in the most disgraceful manner, at first in front of the church and then inside it, after the police had succeeded in driving in a great number of the students. At least six students and one lady student[1] lost their lives during the tumult, while fifty-eight students belonging to the Woods and Forests Academy were severely wounded. The actual number of wounded has never been ascertained.

Barely a month later Bogoliepoff, the Minister of Education, was shot by a former student, Karpovitch, who as early as 1896, at the beginning of the agitation in the high schools, had been expelled from the university of Moscow. His exasperation at the treatment which the authorities dealt out to the students was so intensified by the occurrences in Moscow, Kharkoff, and St. Petersburg, that he determined to take retribution into his own hands.

Two weeks later the authorities had their opportunity of wreaking vengeance. One of the students, Piratoff by name, who had been drafted into the army at Kieff, had returned the gross insults of an officer by striking the latter in the face. He was tried by court-martial and shot. The same fate befell another student soldier—Podgoretsky—in the same year, while several others committed suicide. It has never been officially announced how many of the students were exiled, how many turned into soldiers, or kept in prison. There is no doubt that a very considerable number may be included in each category, and just as little doubt that they were all subjected to such inhuman treatment as only the

[1] Donoff, Bokoff, Molfilevsky, students in the Woods and Forests Academy; Peterson, belonging to the Technological Institute; Baschkotoff and Timofeievitch, belonging to the Medical Institute; and Miss Dubiavo, who was knocked down and killed by four policemen on the Nevski Prospect.

Russian Government and its instruments are permitted to use towards political and other prisoners. On this subject certain statements, as good as official, have appeared recently in two newspapers whose articles on the matters in question have been passed by the censor, and cannot therefore be considered exaggerated as against the Government. The first one was published in No. 93 of the medical journal called *The Vratsch* (*The Doctor*), in reply to a criticism on Leo Tolstoi's description of prison life in his novel "Resurrection," which the critic in question had characterised as untrue and far-fetched. The reply was signed by "A Doctor from Saghalien" (at present the vilest place of deportation for convicts), and declared deliberately that Tolstoi was not only not exaggerating, but, on the contrary, had not painted things so badly as they really were. In proof of this "the doctor from Saghalien" stated, among other things, that prisoners, whether political or not, were as recently as the year 1901 compelled to sleep in the same room, and, even worse, on the floor alongside the "accommodation utensils" (called *parascha* in prisoners' slang) which were placed in the prisons for the night, and which, as a rule, remained there during the day. He also stated, from his own experience in Saghalien, that even a pregnant woman had been whipped in the prison, and that other women in the same condition had been sent to the remotest corners of the island, where it was absolutely impossible for them to obtain medical or other assistance.

Another article concerning the treatment of prisoners appeared in the same year in the legal paper *Pravo* (*Justice*), citing a case of the arrest of a man on suspicion of theft who said he was guilty, although later on, when the actual thief was taken, it was proved that he had not committed the offence. On being asked by the court why he had admitted himself guilty of an offence which he had not

committed, the man said that he had been left after his arrest by the secret police for five days and nights without food, and had otherwise been so barbarously treated that he had sought by means of a false confession to escape the police and get transferred to another prison. In this, however, he was mistaken. The martyrdom was renewed so as to compel him to further confession as to where he had hidden the money which he said he had stolen, and only stopped when the real thief fell into the hands of the police. In spite of all this, the innocent man was kept in prison for another three months before being set at liberty.

If the authorities in the very capital itself could take upon themselves to do such things, it is indisputably clear that the officials in the distant regions of the Empire would not hesitate to act with at least the same unscrupulousness. Because of the impossibility of exercising an effective control over the countless numbers of officials of all grades, and because the public and the newspapers dared not say anything, these officials, the tools of the bureaucratic system, had every opportunity of abusing their power without fear of punishment. This is, of course, part and parcel of the system itself, and cannot be changed as long as it continues, most certainly not when those at the head of it listen to the voices of none but those who are interested in maintaining the existing state of affairs.

Nevertheless, there was no lack of dissentient voices. Both in regard to the Russian sectaries, the students, and the policy pursued against Finland, the press of the civilised world gave utterance in unmistakable language to the thoughts entertained by men with ordinary human feelings towards the Russian Government. In Russia itself warning voices were raised again and again, especially by Leo Tolstoi, whose remarks could not be prevented from reaching the Tsar himself. They fell, however, on barren ground, and the

authorities showed by their formal and final excommunication of Tolstoi in 1901 that they would not tolerate any criticism of their doings.

Nothing had ever incensed Russian society so much as the events that had occurred in front of the Kasan Church in St. Petersburg, and it is quite certain that no such undismayed expression of the unanimous opinion of society was ever uttered. Several persons of high position sent letters of protest to the Prefect of Police and other authorities; a number of "Russian mothers" issued an eloquent appeal to the public; the Society of Authors protested against the "temporary measures" and the brutality of the authorities; and a host of citizens of high standing, members of the Academy, advocates, doctors, higher officials, and others, ninety-six in all, handed to the Minister of the Interior a letter of protest, in which, among other things, it was said:—

"The news of the events of the 17th of March will undoubtedly cause the deepest indignation throughout all Russian society, as it has already done in St. Petersburg. In whose interest was it necessary to slaughter all these people promiscuously in the streets of the capital? The offended conscience of society awaits an answer to this question. Men who realise their duties as citizens cannot remain dumb. We are conscious of these duties, and declare that only the abrogation of the 'temporary regulations' will remove the immediate cause of the present disturbances on the part of the students. Only the judicial arraignment of those, whoever they be, who are responsible for the butchery of the 17th March can set public opinion at rest."

Simultaneously with these protests a number of demonstrations took place in various towns, most of them brought about by the workmen, who generally and in public adopted the war-cry of "Down with absolutism!" which had never before been heard in Russia. Arrests, whippings, and

banishments had no longer any terrorising effect. The demonstrations were repeated from town to town, and in most cases the demonstrators offered a vigorous resistance to the police and Cossacks when attacked by the latter.

The Government, or, perhaps, only the Tsar personally, were somewhat perturbed. The "temporary regulations," though not suspended, were not enforced, and the previous Minister of War, Vannovsky, was appointed Minister of Education. As special commissioner for investigating the previous disturbances of the students, he had not shown himself to be absolutely unfriendly to the young party, and had therefore acquired a certain amount of popularity as being of liberal tendencies, on which account the Tsar thought his appointment might tend to restore tranquillity.

This plan worked for a time. It was assumed that the authorities would yield, and a tacit armistice followed. These tactics were, however, wrong, as they simply gave the Government the idea and belief that the "rebellious" mood was over, and that only further measures of repression were required to strangle it altogether. Such measures were extensively adopted.

In St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kieff, Odessa, Warsaw, Wilna, Nikolaieff, Gomel, Dvinsk, Nijni Novgorod, Rostoff, and many other less important places police searches and consequent arrests were carried out on a very large scale. In one night, in the capital alone, 600 house-to-house investigations were instituted, resulting in 300 arrests. Among those arrested were the whole editorial staff of two progressive newspapers,[1] several professors,[2] any number of students, and even beginners in boys' and girls' schools. In Kieff the number of these house-to-house searches amounted to 120; and in Nijni Novgorod 74 persons were arrested belonging to the

[1] *Schian* and *Mir Coschi*.

[2] Among them Leshaft, Anatomical Professor, sixty-four years of age.

staff of the newspaper *Listok*, among whom was the poet Maxim Gorki. The new Minister, Sipiagin, waged regular war against all that portion of society which he thought had anti-governmental tendencies. The opposition must, at any cost, be crushed once and for all. The Tsar, as usual, allowed his Ministers to govern, no matter what insane measures they might take, as, for instance, the prohibition issued to the Telegraph Department by Sipiagin from forwarding telegrams for Leo Tolstoi.

Sipiagin continued in the same way as he had begun until the bullet of Balmascheff put an end to his career. Never had reaction gone so far as in the time when he held office; never had caprice and inhumanity been so terribly exercised as under him. The right of newspapers to declare their opinion was suppressed altogether as regarded matters which the authorities thought it advisable to hush up. According to a circular issued by Sipiagin to the censorship, no fewer than 1,896 subjects, in addition to all those previously prohibited, were forbidden to be discussed in the press. Private opinion was suppressed in an equally merciless manner. The mere suspicion of anti-Government views sufficed to justify house searches, arrests, and deportations. All those whom the authorities considered as opposed to their regime were treated in the same way: religious sectaries, Jews, workmen inclined to socialism, the most eminent writers and scholars in the country, and the young students. No class of society was any longer safe.

Tolstoi's disciples, after their leader had been banned, were considered as fair game, and dealt with unsparingly. Jews were not allowed to compose more than 3 per cent. of the entire number attending the universities, with the exception of Moscow, where no Jews at all were allowed admittance. Workmen were arrested and deported wholesale the moment they thought of striking work or demonstrating.

Maxim Gorki was expelled from Nijni Novgorod, the author Peter von Struve and Professor Toughan Baranofsky from St. Petersburg. Students were sent in hundreds to Archangel, Viatka, and other remote provinces. According to statistics compiled by the revolutionists, the number of arrests made on "political grounds" during the thirty months of Sipiagin's Ministry amounted to 60,000!

Even then he utterly failed to crush the spirit of resistance. On the contrary, during these years it expressed itself more strongly and in forms not known before. Sipiagin's successor, Von Plehve, the real ruler of Russia, who had no need of consulting any other opinions than those of Pobiedonostseff, noted from the day he took office that the opposition was by no means in the way of being crushed, but was working more zealously and consistently than ever. Even he could invent no fresh means of oppression, though in point of reactionary brutality he managed to go farther than any of his predecessors. Whipping and hanging have never been so common as during these latter years. Von Plehve and the rest of his tribe probably hoped that by urging the reaction farther than ever they might restore peace and patch up the lost reputation of the Empire. They did not perceive that they were already in view of the boundaries which reaction and violence dare not overstep in our days, because no power, not even that of a Tsar, is absolutely unlimited, and because violence may delay, but cannot prevent, the natural and necessary development from which no people or Government can escape.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT UNDER NICHOLAS II.

In the time of Alexander III., as has been pointed out, the members of the different opposition groups had already become convinced that the efforts after reform would never lead to any result until these efforts found a firm basis in the judicial recognition of civil and human rights. It was recognised that the work of the friends of reform had to be carried on in this direction, and that the demand for judicial recognition should be the immediate and most important aim.

The question turned chiefly on the point as to what procedure, methods, and tactics should be adopted to attain the end in view; and this question was answered indirectly, but none the less unmistakably, by the reactionary Government itself. Its policy of at once crushing under foot the slightest attempt at guiding the development of affairs along any path not prescribed by the authorities, though it were in full harmony with a logical and natural progress, could have no other effect than to augment the volume and scope of the discontent. The design, therefore, of the friends of reform was to keep on the track of the reactionary policy of the Government, and, whenever an attempt should be made to crush the natural independent course of development, to throw a light on the meaning of such attempts, and to show that the ruling system, the bureaucratic despotism which had usurped the place of the autocracy, was bound to stifle

all progress just to keep itself at the head of affairs. In this way the murmurs of the ever increasing multitude of the discontented against this or that manifestation of reaction would be transformed into the conviction of the absolute impossibility of the whole system of government which supported the reaction, and by which the latter, in its turn, was maintained. Thanks to the blindness of the Government, whose tactics were all that their enemies could wish, a result has been brought about which a few years ago would have been considered impossible within any reasonable period of time.

It has been shown in the foregoing pages how easy it would have been for Nicholas II. to keep the revolutionary development within the bounds here indicated, on lines similar to those followed during his father's reign. He was in no way bound to the reactionary policy of which the bitter fruits were visible to the world. The slightest degree of capacity to assimilate all the conditions and to draw thence ordinary, reasonable conclusions on which to work might have proved to him that the "autocracy," the unlimited absolutism, which his advisers constantly insisted on his maintaining, had become a most evident stalking-horse for the exercise of unrestricted power on the part of officials, who in every way and in every department were, in all but the name, independent of the Tsar's autocracy.

If the people had been granted a very moderate share, within legal limits, in the government, the personal influence of the Tsar over them would have been extended, and not limited; because his share in power would have been supported by law, and not usurped by servants, while laws originated and maintained by the whole nation would have constituted an insurmountable obstacle against all abuses. This must have been seen by more than one of the advisers of the Tsar, who had adopted the principle of autocracy and

defended it against the justifiable claims of society. Several of these advisers had, as members of the official body, worked themselves upwards from the lowest rung. They must, therefore, have known that their body had become an institution that indisputably possessed all power, without the possibility of being controlled by the nominal head of the State, so that the suggestion that their power would be diminished by allowing the people to participate in the government was merely idle talk.

The Emperor, however, did not see this. He allowed himself to be persuaded into the belief of meaningless phrases, and sanctioned the continuation of a regime which must unavoidably carry matters still further. It was impossible for Russia, in immediate contact with the states of Western Europe, to escape from the influence of their progress. The reactionary authorities themselves, who were continually on the look-out for fresh means wherewith to meet the exigencies of the State, had nothing to say against the introduction of European progress into Russia from the material point of view; on the contrary, they sought in their way to promote it. They did not, however, perceive, or would not admit, that material and intellectual progress were closely allied, and consequently found themselves compelled on the one hand to hurry on progress by artificial means, and on the other hand to hinder it by equally artificial means.

It was, and is in the main, the same struggle between reactionary conservatism and natural democratic progress which was initiated in the time of the great reforms of Alexander II.; but it had now been carried into other spheres of society, and had become more complicated according as progress had assumed fresh shapes and new laws had been enacted. In other countries this dispute had been fought out among the privileged classes, whose influence depends on position and tradition, while their interests coincide so much

with those of the other classes of people as to enable them to count upon the latter's support. In Russia, however, since the suppression of serfdom there has been no such privileged class. In that country the State and its forces—that is, the officials—stand against the whole people, whose interests have never harmonised with those of an absolute bureaucracy. Any understanding or compromise between their conflicting interests is altogether impossible, because the interests of the people cannot be advanced without their being put into the possession of certain rights. On the other hand, the bureaucracy depends for its very existence as an authoritative element in the State on the people being practically excluded from any rights whatever. Hence it follows that the bureaucracy, which in the name of autocracy represents reaction, and is identical with it, is compelled to extend its authority in equal ratio to the material progress of human activity in other spheres by subjugating these spheres to its control, otherwise its own position might become undermined. Hence also it follows that as material progress is impossible without some corresponding degree of intellectual advancement, so must reaction proceed further on its way and become more violent as intellectual development grows and acquires greater strength and support amongst the people.

The course of events in Russia, during the reign of the present Tsar, has been one continued proof of this theoretical reasoning. The policy of the Government, for which the Tsar is in the least degree responsible, has consisted of an uninterrupted series of attempts on the part of the bureaucracy to maintain intact its sovereign authority by the extension of its influence over all spheres of activity newly inaugurated by the State or the civil authorities. The efforts of the opposition, the revolutionists, have naturally been bent on inciting in every way and by all means the feeling of discontent against the policy of the Imperial bureaucracy.

The authorities themselves have thus shown to the opposition the only right and sure road to bring about the political revolution which is at present admitted by everyone to be the fundamental condition of real progress.

By the policy of persecution against the Jews, which began under Alexander III. and was continued by his son and successor, the Tsardom, looked at as a whole, has driven the entire Jewish nationality into the camp of its adversaries. As long as the Jews were tacitly tolerated and allowed some sort of freedom to earn their livelihood and bring up their children no general desire was displayed by them to acquire political rights; but when they had been congregated into folds, or "compounds," in the west and south-west frontier districts, their aspirations soon assumed a concrete shape, and have since been pressed forward with extraordinary energy.

All the above-mentioned efforts of the authorities to restrict the rights of the Jews, the prohibitions issued with regard to their moving beyond the limits assigned to them, the severe curtailment of their rights of admittance to the different places of instruction, etc., have only had the effect of driving this persecuted people in ever increasing numbers and with more and more zeal into the various revolutionary organisations in West Russia, of which they have become most active and energetic members. The Jewish Workmen's Union, including Poles, Lithuanians, and Little Russians, is a particularly vigorous institution, which for years past has published its own paper and issued a countless number of pamphlets, leaflets, booklets, appeals, etc., from its own secret press, which the police, in spite of their efforts, extending over several years, have not been able to discover. This union of theirs, which, though purely socialistic in its character, recognises first of all the necessity of securing political freedom, has been the means of attracting to the

revolutionary movement the vast majority of the crowded working population of West Russia and Poland.

The close connection between the members of the union and the community of interests between them and other workmen have been proved and developed by strikes and demonstrations, repeated year after year, which are continually on the increase, and make the political position of the workmen clearer than ever, even to outsiders. The attempts of the Government to suppress this union have only had the effect of rendering the sympathies of the people more manifest and strengthening them to such an extent indeed as to give them active expression. Take, for instance, the case of November, 1901, when the inhabitants of the town of Smorgon, in the province of Wilna, endeavoured to liberate by violence forty-one workmen who had been arrested. It is true that the Cossacks were able to beat off their assailants with their knouts, but a thousand other workmen struck work as a protest against the arrests.

A few weeks later, towards the end of December, another very active workmen's union, "The Social Democratic Labour Party," convoked a big political demonstration at Ekaterinoslav. The customary wholesale whippings and thrashings took place, one hundred and four working men and seventeen students being arrested; but, in spite of that, the demonstration was continued during the next day, with cries of "Freedom for ever!" "Down with absolutism!" and the like, which admitted of no doubt as to their purpose. At Kharkoff workmen and students made common cause, and paraded together in such numbers and with such enthusiasm that it took the police and Cossacks four days to quell the disturbances. Red flags, denunciations of the autocracy, and huzzas for liberty characterised the demonstrations here, as everywhere else. At least two hundred and fifty persons were expelled from the city, and about a hundred arrested

while the number of those injured in the conflict amounted to several hundreds. The outcome of all this was, however, so little, that Kharkoff itself early in 1902 became, as is well known, the hotbed of further troubles in South Russia.

These brutal proceedings had no more effect elsewhere than to increase the power and energy of the demonstrations against the existing system. It is well known that in February of the same year demonstrations took place all over Russia in commemoration of the emancipation of the peasants, with the object of rousing the people to demand liberty and political rights. The working people made common cause everywhere with the educated classes, and in many places took over the entire direction of the proceedings. Only in those places, such as Moscow, where measures were taken by utilising the soldiery to prevent the workmen from combining with the students, was it possible to suppress large meetings.

In St. Petersburg, by way of forestalling the demonstration, all persons were arrested who happened to be under suspicion of being likely to play a prominent part. In one single night, 20th February, nine hundred arrests were made; and the next day the audience at the "People's Theatre," consisting chiefly of working men and students, was most brutally ill-treated, wholesale arrests being made. Nevertheless the number of demonstrators who appeared, twelve hours later, before the Kasan Church, with the usual display of red flags and with cries of "Down with Tsardom!" amounted to forty thousand persons, considerably more than had ever been known before.

In Moscow, as we have already said, the authorities succeeded, with the aid of some twenty-five thousand troops, in preventing the working people from entering the city proper, so that the police were able to deal with the demonstrators in the way they liked best. About one thousand two

hundred of these were arrested, among them twenty-one officers, and were detained in prison for a longer or shorter period, some hundreds of whom were sent into exile.

Similar occurrences took place all over Russia, although not, perhaps, to such a great extent. The workmen throughout the country are now thoroughly convinced that absolutism, the Tsardom, is the enemy, and that all their efforts must be directed to the overthrow of this autocracy, since neither workers nor anyone else can look forward to any future as long as it continues to rule. The policy of reaction, in regard to the workmen and other classes of society, has simply had the results which could only naturally be expected to spring from it.

The Government plucked the same fruits by their proceedings in connection with the students. Originally the discontent displayed by the young people at the universities and high schools referred only to the state of things in particular establishments; but as all, even the most peaceful and loyal, attempts to procure a change, were stamped by the authorities as symptoms of a "rebellious spirit" and treated in the most brutal manner, only one result could be the consequence. The students, like all other branches of society, had been forced to the conviction that the system itself, the bureaucratic despotism, called an autocracy, was the root of all the evil, and this had the quite natural result that the students who were particularly interested in questions of social progress at once joined the revolutionary movement. Whoever has paid the slightest attention to the events that have occurred in Russia in recent years knows that the revolutionary movement counts its most self-sacrificing, enthusiastic, and active adherents among the studious young men in all the high schools of the Empire. The theological seminaries themselves have not remained free from the revolutionary taint, as was proved by the discovery of a secret society early in 1902.

Precisely similar has been the effect of the persecution of the different nationalities in the Empire. We all know that the Poles are, heart and soul, on the side of revolution. They possess several revolutionary organisations, all tending to work together, and for the present putting on one side merely national, social, and other problems, in order to join with others who see in the constitutional restriction of the governmental power the most important and nearest object for revolutionary action. The Little Russians have also come to the same conclusion as the result of the years and years of ruthless war waged against their language and national idiosyncracies. Among them also there are organisations ready to work, with ample means at their disposal, for the downfall of Tsardom, as their writings abundantly prove.

Finally, even the moderate liberals in Russia saw themselves compelled to resort to revolutionary means and methods. The newspaper *Schisn*, which we have already alluded to, first published and then suppressed in St. Petersburg, has reappeared in London, whence it is smuggled into Russia. It has become a political organ, representing a large section of the liberal party, which is only so far revolutionary that it strives for a change in the system of government, and the restriction of the supreme power now transferred to the bureaucracy.

CHAPTER XVI.

SUPPLEMENT: THE VON PLEHVE REGIME.

A DESCRIPTION of the internal development in Russia during the three years which will shortly have elapsed from the commencement of the present work would in itself furnish sufficient material for a fresh book. For this reason it can only be a question of presenting here a brief survey of the most important events and characteristic features of this development.

Every reader is in a position to observe for himself that the conclusions drawn in the preceding sections of this work, as well as the general predictions, have been justified as correct in every respect by the development which has taken place in very recent times.

Nicholas II. did not understand that salvation for himself and his dynasty would only have been rendered possible by the commencement of seriously intended reform "from top to bottom." He is now, therefore, face to face with a revolution, which has already begun, and has such forces at its disposal that he will no longer possess the power to stop it; for in the whole of his immense dominion there no longer exists a class of society that would be prepared to defend the system of government which he has repeatedly declared his intention of maintaining by all means at his disposal.

The feature which above all characterises the development of events during late years is that it is no longer possible to speak of a revolutionary development emanating from and conducted by one or more parties; it is rather the struggle

of an entire people or of all strata of society against the autocracy and its representatives. The entire mass of "intellectuals" in the Empire, independently of all party views and sympathies, all class points of view and interests, is conscientiously striving for the abolition of the autocracy and the introduction of the constitutional system of government. Meanwhile the people at large, owing to the war, the wretched economical circumstances, bureaucratic oppression, etc., have become so permeated with dissatisfaction with the prevailing system that they are prepared to follow anyone who holds out a prospect of change for the better. Under the present circumstances this dissatisfaction prevails everywhere to a similar extent throughout the Empire, although its mode of manifesting itself may not be the same in different directions; and everywhere the masses have found spokesmen and advocates among the educated classes who have clearly and distinctly recognised that the cause of the prevailing misery lies in the system itself, which must therefore be radically modified.

Formerly only in the so-called revolutionary circles had the view prevailed that a constitution placing elective power in the hands of the people could rescue Russia from the plight to which autocracy had brought her. All others still believed that by means of reforms in various directions a way might be found out of the difficulties. They credited the possibility of maintaining the autocratic principle in a State system in which the law had been declared to be the highest power and applied in like measure to all. In this respect they differed from the radical point of view, which was held to be revolutionary; because, consistently and logically, the latter ventured to draw the only true and consequent conclusions from the premises which the development presented. The position is now quite different. The independent elements which, in spite of all their dissatisfaction

with the existing circumstances, and in spite of all their feeling for reform, sought to remain faithful to the autocracy and only styled themselves "liberals," have during the past three years likewise realised that the reigning power must be hedged about with legal restrictions in order that effective and permanent improvements may be attained.

All these elements—that is to say, all those which have no direct interest in the continued existence of the system by which all power is placed in the hands of responsible officials —now join with the revolutionaries in requiring the introduction of a constitution. But there exists still a distinction. The latter go further than the former, as they clearly emphasise that in federation lies the only way of governing so extensive an empire as Russia, with such varied climatic and other conditions and such dissimilar nationalities and interests; whilst the "liberals" or constitutionals for the most part still cling to belief in the possibility of a uniform constitutional monarchy, with more or less local autonomy for the different parts of the Empire. But as to the necessity of granting the people the right of participating in the government they are all agreed. In this respect the whole of Russia, with the exception of a portion of the bureaucratic class and a portion of the military, is in like measure revolutionary so far as the introduction of constitutional popular government involves the abolition of the autocracy. Here likewise with regard to the conversion of the independent elements, previously supporters of the Tsardom, it is the Government, the regime itself, which has engendered the movement, partly through the war with Japan, which has resulted from the criminal and callous thoughtlessness of the governing classes, partly by the remorseless reaction, which has made itself more and more manifest during recent years.

Sipiagin, when Minister of the Interior, had already brought matters so far by his reactionary policy of violence

that the news of his assassination at the hands of Belmatcheff was received with unmixed joy in all classes of Russian society. But the fullest proof of the irreconcilableness of autocracy with things like improvement and progress was furnished by the successor of Sipiagin, Von Plehve, who soon proved himself to be the complete personification of all evil, heartlessness, and corruption, and full of the contempt for human rights and persons that is natural in an autocracy carried on by irresponsible officials in the name of a worthless ruler. Von Plehve, who had now been all-powerful for some length of time in Russia, began his career with the blackest treachery towards a Polish magnate who had once received him into his home and educated him, but whom he, notwithstanding, denounced to the Governor-General of Poland, Muravieff, "the executioner," as one of the leaders of the Polish insurrection in the year 1863. In consequence of this denunciation, Von Plehve's benefactor was condemned to death by strangulation, whilst he himself was rewarded by a post in Muravieff's office. His later activity was worthy of such a beginning, as it was chiefly exercised in connection with that portion of the police which at that time belonged to the so-called "third section."

In his new post, he made himself known by his cunning, which was only equalled by his unscrupulousness. The attention of the highest circles was drawn to his person when, after the assassination of Alexander II., he conducted the prosecution at the arraignment of the participators in the deed. Later, on being appointed State Secretary, he was able, by his persistent zeal in the service of the reaction, to place himself on a good footing with those in power, particularly with the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Pobiedonostseff, who, when the policy of destroying the Finnish constitution was determined upon, found a good tool in Von Plehve. In the anti-Finn *coup d'état* he played

a considerable part, particularly as member of the secret committee which drafted the plan for the Russification of the Finnish Grand Duchy, and drew up the manifesto; while, still later, as Secretary for Finland, together with the then Governor-General Bobrikoff, he conducted and carried out the well-known policy of suppression.

As Minister of the Interior, Von Plehve lost no time in showing what policy he intended to follow, as he declared the general dissatisfaction in Russia to be solely the result of the conspiracy and machinations of a handful of evil disposed persons, who could easily be rendered incapable of harm if only the police were sufficiently strengthened and received extensive powers. This was to be his first aim, and he proclaimed his assurance that within a few months peace would once more be restored in the Empire. In this spirit, then, he consistently conducted the Government policy, particularly after he had succeeded in concentrating within his own hands a power greater than that of all the other Ministers combined. The Minister came into conflict shortly after his appointment with a number of his colleagues, especially with the Finance Minister, De Witte, who had previously been practically omnipotent, and with the Minister of Justice, Muravieff. The difference with the latter hinged on the question of the treatment of "political criminals," the trials of whom Von Plehve wished to allocate to a special court-martial, the proceedings being conducted with closed doors, whilst the Minister of Justice required a public trial before the ordinary courts. The Tsar, as usual, followed the most reactionary counsel. The Minister of the Interior carried his will into effect to such an extent that under his direction the most important political trials took place before military tribunals, particularly that of Belmatscheff, who was by order condemned to death, although the Russian law only punishes crimes like his with imprisonment.

Of deeper significance and more far-reaching effects was the conflict with the Finance Minister, who, indeed, was far more menacing to Von Plehve's exalted position. Without being imbued with really liberal views, but being possessed of intelligence and a clear view as regards all social phenomena, De Witte, doubtless one of the most able statesmen Russia has possessed in recent times, recognised that, if matters in the Empire continued much longer in the same way, a catastrophe was unavoidable. He himself, by his policy of tariffs, had been the creator of that artificial industry which had drawn hundreds and thousands of workmen from the country to the towns in the course of a relatively short time. In the towns they were subjected to the influence of tendencies which carried the majority of the industrial workers away with them. He recognised better than anyone that the crisis which followed the brief period of prosperity of the newly created industries, and which seriously threatened the economical development of the Empire, could not be rendered harmless in any other way than by the improvement of the position of the agricultural population, and consequently of their consuming powers. He likewise understood better than others the danger, in a political sense, which the economic crisis involved; for, owing to the decline of industry, large masses of unfed and extremely dissatisfied workmen, infected with socialistic and revolutionary doctrines, were compelled to return to their homes in the country, where they devoted themselves to political propagandism among the common people. In view of these facts, De Witte obtained the consent of the Tsar to the formation of committees, in the different parts of the country, consisting of representatives of agriculture, and including both large estate owners and men of the people, to whom was allotted the task of declaring their views as to the cause of the decline of Russian agriculture, and of indicating steps for the improvement of agricultural

conditions. De Witte himself urged the committees to express themselves freely and openly as to the causes of the prevailing misery, and as to the means of remedying it.

But in all probability he hardly expected that these utterances would go so far in their openness as they really did. Quite a number of committees were perspicacious enough to deal not merely with the economical, but likewise with the general political position, though recognising that the former was very closely connected with the latter. In this way the ice was broken. One committee after the other criticised the existing system of government with astonishing boldness, and required an unconditional and radical change therein, in order to render possible an amendment of the social and productive conditions in Russia both among the population engaged in agriculture and in other classes of society.

Everywhere in the Russian Empire these utterances commanded the most anxious attention. It was long since anything of the kind had been seen or heard in Holy Russia; it was as though a fresh breeze had been wafted from the outside world, where freedom and human rights are not merely theoretical ideas, into the reactionary darkness. It was the representatives of the *zemstvo* assemblies who played the chief part in the agricultural committees, and consequently hopes began to be cherished more or less everywhere that these assemblies would now receive amplified rights, and that in this way the basis would be laid for the future and for the constitution dreamt of by all.

Such hopes were, however, not to the taste of Von Plehve, the new Minister of the Interior. Every mention of liberal reforms was in the last degree distasteful to him. It was not towards reform that he desired to direct his policy, but to the aims and the power of the parties which he could lead. Those parties and the military should support the Tsardom

and maintain it. The other elements of society were to be satisfied with what the Government could and would do for them. They had no right to advance claims, least of all to require an alteration of the system of government. He who did this committed a crime against the holy person of the Tsar, and must be punished lest his example should infect others. Acting on these lines, Von Plehve chose as the first subject for punishment the committee which had expressed itself most sharply and with the greatest openness, namely, that of Voronesch. The president of this committee, who was Marshal of Nobility in the Assinov province, received orders by telegram to proceed to Livadia, in the Crimea, where the Tsar was staying at the time, and was sharply reprimanded with respect to his conduct. Two members of the committee, the old pedagogue Burakoff and a doctor, Martinoff, had to suffer their houses to be searched, and were arrested and exiled by administrative process; an old Government employee, Vaschkevitch, was removed from his post; and the Governor of Voronesch, Slaptsoff, received the order to hand in his resignation, owing to his having been unable to prevent the adoption of the objectionable proposals. In a similar way, though not to the same extent, the Minister of the Interior dealt with the members of the other committees, and finally they were dissolved, without having achieved any other result than a number of reports which had been drawn up by them, and which ended by being pigeon-holed in one record office or the other. Von Plehve had conquered the Finance Minister. But his success was a Pyrrhic victory. At one stroke he converted a large number of liberal friends of reform into radical adherents of the emancipation movement, while to all others who had followed the proceedings of the agricultural committees with interest and expectancy he brought home a clear apprehension of the fact that a regime, under which the will or the whim of an irresponsible official

could bring to naught plans having for their object the amendment of the conditions of life of many millions of people, could never contribute to the promotion of national development.

Similar fruits were borne by Von Plehve's policy in many other directions, partly owing to his want of faith and partly owing to his brutality in cases where, in his opinion, it was conducive to his end. He likewise saw clearly that the continually growing ferment among the workers could not by any possibility be suppressed by violence, and he therefore sought to combat it by cunning. Police agents, under the direction of Subatoff, a trusted agent of Von Plehve's, received the order to ingratiate themselves with the workmen and induce them to form unions which did not do homage to socialistic teachings. Such unions easily obtained the sanction of the authorities, and once they were under the guidance of the secret police, the Minister of the Interior believed it to be in his power to suppress the socialist unions and their agitation. In the first place, the police agents, in order to gain the confidence of the workmen, even received permission to organise strikes and to exercise pressure on the employers in order to compel them to consider the claims of the strikers, and thus to render secure the command of the police over them. In Moscow, where this method was first employed and had the desired result, matters in a short time went so far that the factory owners saw themselves compelled to make complaints (some were even heard by the Tsar) about the workmen's agitation, conducted by the Minister of the Interior, which threatened them with ruin. At the same time, the members of the socialist unions turned to account the opportunity offered by Von Plehve's unions for the dissemination of socialistic propaganda, so that these unions in reality became hotbeds and centres of anti-Government agitation. The Minister of the Interior now immediately

changed his tactics, and adopted an entirely opposite method of procedure. The police received the order to withdraw from the management of the workmen's unions in those cases where the agents had become known as tools of the Government. All workmen subscribing to socialistic and anti-Government ideas were arrested and exiled, partly to Siberia and partly to remote provinces where they could find no occupation in their own trade, while strikes were no longer allowed, but were repressed just as ruthlessly as before. But the working classes had received tangible proof of the faithlessness of the Government and the impossibility of any improvement of their position and circumstances under the existing regime. The consequence was that they joined the social revolutionary movement in greater numbers than ever before, the movement having every reason to be thankful for this indirect assistance.

But even greater malignity was evinced by Von Plehve s brutal policy towards the Jews in the Empire, who indeed had always served as scapegoats in troublous times for any discontent, either on the Government's part or the people's, though seldom to such an extent as during the period now in question. It cannot very well be presumed that orthodoxy lay at the bottom of the hatred of Von Plehve for the Jews, because he himself had changed his religion once, if not twice.

His animosity against the Jews was evidently due partly to his generally reactionary and brutal character, partly to fear mingled with hatred of the influence which the Jewish revolutionists exercised in the general opposition movement, and lastly perhaps, to the desire to put himself on a familiar footing with the influential party represented by the Procurator of the Holy Synod, at the cheap price of the persecution of a defenceless race. In this he surpassed all his predecessors and contemporaries in Russia, not even excepting the Grand Duke Sergius, the Governor-General of

Moscow, who had proved himself an anti-Semite of a higher degree than anybody else. Still the latter had limited himself to driving the Jews with relentless severity out of the city of which he was the first and highest authority. The Minister of the Interior, Von Plehve, however, went farther by setting on foot, through his police, Jewish massacres, as, for instance, at Kishineff and Homel, not to mention other towns where the persecutions were in active progress until the storm of exasperation which they had stirred all over the rest of the world induced the Minister of the Interior to give counter-orders and to stop the further campaign. That the police, ruled despotically by the Minister of the Interior, had in fact systematically organised the butchery, was brought clearly to light at the proceedings taken against the men accused of the bloodshed, when official partiality, exercised by order, reached such a scandalous height that all the counsel for the plaintiffs declared that they would not enter upon any further discussions, since the court was evidently trying to prevent them from making the truth known and bringing the real culprits to justice. That the newspaper which had in the first place encouraged an attack upon the Jews was under the direct influence of the Minister of the Interior was also made manifest during the legal proceedings. But the latter were no more able to obtain a satisfactory result than was the investigation with regard to the pillagings and murders at Homel, where the police and soldiers, as at Kishineff, saw the outrages committed without interfering in any way.

A further proof of the conduct of the Minister in face of these events is furnished by the fact that the Governor of Kishineff, as it leaked out later on, had at the very beginning of the disorders telegraphed to the Minister of the Interior asking whether he was to use the military for the suppression of the revolt, but for three days received no answer. Only

after the acts of violence had lasted for some time did an answer arrive in the affirmative to this question. The military was ordered out, and the disturbances were immediately brought to an end. To what degree this butchery and the instigation of similar horrors in Odessa and in other towns throughout the Empire increased the exasperation of the Jews against a system of government, which not only rendered possible such crimes against peaceable and defenceless subjects, but even perpetrated them itself, is easy to imagine. Even the intention to instil terror into the Jews for having joined the revolutionary movement missed its aim completely, because, on the contrary, many who, though sympathising with it, had previously stood aloof, now tried to take an active part in its favour. The Jews, like others, were compelled by M. Von Plehve to recognise the fact that they could never hope to arrive at a peaceful enjoyment of human rights or citizenship until despotism was abolished and replaced by a lawful system of government.

Against the non-Russian nationalities which belong to the Russian Empire an equally short-sighted policy was instituted by the Minister of the Interior, inasmuch as he tried to Russify them by force; with the result, however, that in each of them an anti-Imperial opposition formed itself, which made them more or less inclined to open revolution. In Finland the policy of Russification was pursued with such ruthless energy that even its principal tool, the brutal Governor, General Bobrikoff, saw himself more than once compelled to recommend greater caution and more patience towards the opposition in his principality. But the Minister of the Interior allowed himself only to a small degree to be hindered in carrying out his plans. By a glaring breach of the law judges and administrative officials were dismissed by the dozen. Courts and administrations were made completely dependent upon the Governor-General; even the Senate,

the local government of the Grand Duchy, was reduced to little more than an office for carrying out the orders of the Russian Governor-General. Finally, the latter, by special ukase from the Tsar, received the complete dignity of dictator, of which he made use at once to issue orders of exile, deportation, and imprisonment against all those who had excited his supreme displeasure, or even that of his subalterns. Neither did this policy miss its effect in Finland. The position was little by little better understood; sympathy became ever stronger with those in Russia who devoted their energies to revolutionary propaganda, and were driven into terrorism as the only means by which the absolutely lawless power of the Government could be fought against. More and more frequently and in ever wider circles in Finland was vent given to the hope that somebody would by an armed hand make an end of the despotism exercised by the Governor-General. Then, on the 16th of June, the long-expected event took place. Eugene Schaumann shot the Governor-General down, and immediately afterwards took his own life. Coming from a highly educated family, in which neither revolutionary nor anarchist opinions were fostered, Schaumann had been impelled to take action by the conviction that no other means offered any more hope for safety from the fate which threatened Finland. The policy of violence had had as a consequence the usual and inevitable result. Violence had engendered violence; terrorism had made its entrance into a part of the Tsar's empire where it had never shown itself before, and its first consequence was now hailed with a joy as universal as it was unconcealed.

In a still higher degree the policy of the Russian Government has, during the last few years, fostered terrorism among another nationality, viz., among the Armenians, in whom also it had previously not taken root. The policy of

repression, to which allusion has been made, initiated by Prince Galitzin against the Armenians, was continued during Von Plehve's period of office with greater ruthlessness than ever, and culminated in the confiscation of the national funds of the Armenians and the adherents of the Armenian Church, which amounted altogether to the sum of three hundred million francs. The whole brutality of this measure only becomes properly clear if one considers that the expenses for the excellent Armenian school system, for hospitals, benevolent societies, etc., were, as well as those for the churches and the clergy, defrayed for the greater part out of these funds. When it is further taken into consideration that the Armenians in Europe as well as those in Asia Minor, Persia, and in other places, have already contributed to these funds for more than a century, it will be easily understood how great the exasperation would become against the Government of the Tsar and its criminal depredations. In many places the populace tried to oppose the spoliation by force; in other places the priests tried to prevent it personally, whilst at the same time the aged Primate of the Armenian Church did all in his power to induce the Tsar and his Government to put a stop to their inhuman and unwarranted proceedings. But all was to no purpose. Police and military suppressed by force of arms every resistance, and in so doing spared neither priests nor others. The advisers of the Tsar had persuaded him that the Russification of the Armenians was useful and necessary for the Empire. They must, therefore, be deprived of the means and the possibility of maintaining any national institution whatever. But neither the Tsar nor his advisers had expected that the Armenians could dare to turn against Tsardom and its power, as happened immediately after. The widespread organisation which had been founded to assist the Armenians in Turkey in their struggle against the Turkish rule of violence and bloodshed now received into its

programme the struggle against Tsardom also; and as such a struggle quite naturally could not be carried on openly the Armenians quite as naturally had recourse to terrorism. Within the period of little more than three years which had elapsed since the outrages had begun in this part of the Empire nearly thirty of them were perpetrated, most of them with a successful result, inasmuch as the victims selected were killed, while the perpetrators escaped. One of the four who eluded their well-deserved fate was the former Governor-General of Caucasia, Prince Galitzin, who was only wounded. But at all events he was so much struck by terror that he left his post head over heels, and has not dared since to return to the Caucasus.

The nearest neighbours of the Armenians, the Georgians, were likewise during Von Plehve's time of office brought to the conviction that they could expect no salvation from the Government of the Tsar, which oppressed them in a higher degree than ever before, and that they must perforce make rights of their own. Within the most recent times the Georgian revolutionary organisation has laboured, with remarkable success, in diffusing the spirit of resistance throughout the inaccessible mountain regions of Caucasia; and since the war which meanwhile broke out between Russia and Japan, and showed the utter corruption of the Russian military power, the work so far prospered that, according to the latest news, a general revolt may be expected at every moment. What this would mean for Russia under the present circumstances will be patent to everyone who considers that a period of thirty years elapsed before Russia was able to subdue the tribes in the mountain regions of the Caucasus.

In Poland also the war in Eastern Asia has brought the long-suppressed exasperation to show itself in a manner which bears a great resemblance to open revolt. At the beginning of the war distinct signs of a revolutionary spirit

could already be observed in Poland; but, far from allowing its policy to be influenced by it, the Russian Government tried, on the contrary, to rid the country of its turbulent elements by sending away large numbers of Polish recruits and reservists. The Minister of the Interior had learned to ignore the actual state of affairs in this as well as in other parts of the Empire too completely to desist from a policy which was likely to drive the Poles to despair. Here, as elsewhere, M. Von Plehve had shown an almost incredible shortsightedness as a statesman in trusting exclusively to measures of repression, which he had carried out by the police and the soldiery. What result this method has had as a consequence everybody knows who has followed the course of events at Warsaw, Lodz, and in Poland generally.

Furthermore, with regard to foreign nations and their sentiments M. Von Plehve showed the same shortsightedness and want of judgment, incomprehensible in a statesman, that had characterised his home policy. He repeatedly declared in public that Russia was not at all concerned with the opinion of the rest of the world, but in secret he did everything in order to influence this opinion so as to be less unfavourably disposed towards the Russian Empire. At no time have bribes been distributed so lavishly among the newspapers of the different countries as by him; never have their columns been purchased at such a high price for flattering descriptions of the state of things in Russia as by M. Von Plehve's agents. With regard to Russia's policy towards Finland especially, he, who at the same time was State Secretary of the Ministry of the Grand Duchy of Finland, was shown to be in the highest state of nervous tension regarding the severe comments which often enough found expression in European and other newspapers. Through his numerous agents, spread all over Europe, he knew that in Finland, from the first day of

the policy of repression, no pains had been spared to keep the world's press accurately and correctly informed about the events; consequently, he was also aware that the brutal policy of Russification in Finland had caused widespread indignation, and that this had at the same time drawn the attention of the rest of the universe to the internal circumstances of Russia. Thence he drew the false conclusion that if he succeeded in denying the brutality and want of good faith of the policy of the Tsar towards Finland, or in diverting attention, opinion about the internal policy of the Tsar's Government would also be moderated. He therefore more than once wrote statements referring to the Finnish question and had them published for this purpose in dearly bought French newspapers, though invariably with the same insignificant result, for such articles were always immediately followed by numerous and well-grounded refutations, which destroyed all their efficacy. At last he was even led to throw off his anonymity, evidently in the hope that his name, which was so much feared in Russia, would carry weight in Europe, and answered in person an open letter addressed to him by the editor of the *Review of Reviews* in London concerning the policy of Russification in Finland and its damaging effect on the government of the Tsar in the eyes of other nations. But his very clumsily written reply, which started from the thesis that an autocrat would no longer be an autocrat if he allowed himself to be hindered in the exercise of his power by anything whatsoever, even if it were his own words and promises, only had the result of affording the English newspapers an opportunity for a refutation which was perfectly annihilating, and for an exposure, more severe than whole volumes, of the policy of Tsardom and the arguments with which it was justified. Thus, as regards outside opinion, Von Plehve's political ineptitude and lack of statesmanlike insight and tact was in a high degree injurious to the system,

to defend and strengthen which he declared to be his principal task.

In strong contrast with the tactics of the foreign press stood the behaviour of the Minister of the Interior towards the Russians, who were not allowed to discuss State matters in any shape or form. If anyone dared to utter in print opinions disliked by the Minister, he had to be prepared for domiciliary search, arrest, exile, or, in the best of cases, banishment from the town in which the offence had been committed. By such means, it is true, the purpose of silencing public opinion was achieved; but so much the better was the ground prepared for the illegal press, "the subterranean newspapers," as these organs are called in Russia. The social democratic party, as well as the revolutionary socialists, had for a long time published regular periodicals; and their example was now followed by the liberals, who, under the editorship of the journalist P. von Struve, who had come from St. Petersburg, published abroad a periodical which appeared twice a month, and which in a short time succeeded in gaining much authority and considerable influence in public affairs in high Russian society. This periodical, besides a number of topical papers, pamphlets, leaflets, and books, was smuggled on a large scale into Russia, and eagerly read by all classes of the population, who literally hungered for such reading matter. The Government did what it could to prevent the importation and distribution of such literature in the country. Everyone who was proved to have taken part in the smuggling was arrested, but later when the prisons were overfull, and there was no longer sufficient room there, the police confined themselves to subjecting to supervision all those who introduced, circulated, purchased, or read such detestable literature. How many were arrested in Von Plehve's time on this ground is not known, but that their number must be very considerable appears from the fact that

on the frontier of Finland alone more than ten persons, men and women, got into the clutches of the police for smuggling printed matter.

All these measures, however, were of as little use as the fanatical zeal with which the Minister of the Interior persecuted all those who in any way sympathised with the movement of freedom. For in this respect also Von Plehve surpassed all the previous standard-bearers of reaction. Not even during the last period of the reign of Alexander II. or the first period of the reign of Alexander III., when the members of the party of the "Narodnaia Volia" were hunted like wild animals all over Russia, had such eager persecutions been set on foot against all who fell under the suspicion of favouring the opposition or even only of sympathising with it. Never have the police been so numerous or so powerful as under Von Plehve's regime; never were such trifling causes sufficient to deprive both sexes of citizens of their liberty, to expose them to ill-treatment, and to send them into exile. But never, on the other hand, have such means proved to be more powerless. All measures of oppression and intimidation have only served to strengthen the spirit of resistance among the broad strata of the lower classes as well as in educated circles, and more especially in the higher institutions for learning, which have, at all times, been the centres of liberal agitation in Russia. During Von Plehve's time perfect quiet never prevailed in all the universities and high schools of the Empire. Arrests and banishments of students and professors had followed continuously as a consequence of fresh protests and demonstrations, and the suspension of teaching establishments ordered for a longer or shorter period only gave occasion to young students to work with greater zeal and increased energy for the propagation of revolutionary ideas in their native districts. Outrages were committed in such numbers in various parts of the Empire by higher and

lower political tools of the Minister of the Interior that volumes would be filled if they were all to be described. The so-called "Organisation of the Struggle," the same that had slain the previous Minister of the Interior, Sipiagin, also sentenced to death the Governor of Ulfa, Bogdanovitch. He was assassinated because, during a strike, he had ordered a number of workmen to be shot down without their having committed any excesses. Several other murderous attempts undertaken by the said organisation failed in so far as the attacked persons, although wounded, were able to make good their escape; but they contributed all the more to increase the nervous excitement and terror of the tools of the Government. The police, it is true, succeeded every now and then in arresting members of the revolutionary parties, but new companions in the struggle ever took the place of the fallen ones. Martyrdom was more attractive than terrible for them. Nobody heeded personal danger any more; all were ready to sacrifice freedom and life for the cause of freedom. Should this period be accurately described at any future time, then the history of humanity will be enriched by some of its most glorious pages.

At last Von Plehve, too, was overtaken by his fate. On the 28th of July, 1904, a member of the "Organisation of the Struggle" threw a bomb into the carriage of the Minister as he was driving towards the Warsaw railway station in St. Petersburg, on his way to an audience with the Tsar. He was killed instantaneously; while the assassin Sasonov, and a second terrorist, Sickocki, who had lent him assistance, were arrested and condemned to twenty and eleven years respectively of penal servitude.

They were not brought before a court-martial, but before a civil court, and they were sentenced according to the ordinary criminal law. This fact shows clearly what the feeling was that already possessed the authorities on the

occasion of the assassination of the Minister of the Interior. The satisfaction was in reality much greater and more general than on the occasion of the death of Sipiagin, and it showed itself much more openly in all ranks of the whole of Russia, in the higher circles as well as among the common people. Everywhere Von Plehve's death was considered as a deliverance, and it was felt more or less instinctively that the reaction had, in him and through him, played its highest trump. He could not go further than his system, although some of his utterances appeared to be even more cruel and bloody than the worst of his deeds. It was well known that he personally was not the author of all the manifestations of reaction which had shown themselves during his time of office; but it was also known that his influence on the monarch, without a character and without a firm will of his own, was such that, had he wished to do so, he could have avoided the worst results of the system. It was likewise understood that he had the capacity of suggesting to his master thoughts and ideas which afterwards the Tsar would consider as his own, in the event of his giving orders to his Minister of the Interior to transform them into measures authorised by the Government. For this reason he was also quite rightly made responsible for the unsatisfactory state of the whole Empire.

The expression "quite rightly" is used advisedly and with full justification, for perhaps never before has the leader of the Government of a great empire—which M. Von Plehve after he had succeeded in encompassing the fall of the Minister of Finance, Witte, undoubtedly was—shown such a complete want of statesmanlike tact as he did. It is impossible to mention one single act of the Government during his time of office which would have been worthy of a real statesman, nay, not even one which has not contributed to undermine the authority of the Government, the system

of which he pretended to protect and to maintain. The persecutions of the educated classes which called themselves liberal, but which at the beginning of his leadership only asked for liberal reforms under the auspices of the Tsardom, caused most of their representatives to become open antagonists of the autocratic system. His repeated attempts to delude the people by unreliable promises and empty, hypocritical phrases in the Tsar's name into the belief that the Government intended to introduce real improvements killed the confidence and devotion of the masses towards the Tsar and the system which he represents. His behaviour towards the Jews drove them in large numbers into the socialistic and revolutionary camps. His brutality towards the young students and their teachers turned the universities and high schools into hotbeds and strongholds of the movement for freedom. His faithlessness towards the workers caused the great majority of them to become convinced partisans of revolution. His rapacious treatment of the Armenians brought this whole intelligent and energetic nation into arms against the dominion of Tsardom. His policy in Georgia, in Finland, in Poland, in Lithuania, and in Little Russia, where the greatest oppression was generally exercised, had little by little the effect of bringing revolution into full swing.

This was universally recognised in Russia, and more or less clearly according to the various classes of society. The new era which was anticipated after the death of the execrated and dreaded Minister of the Interior was therefore hailed on every hand with hope and rejoicing.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TIME AFTER THE DEATH OF THE MINISTER VON PLEHVE.

THE war against Japan, which was begun against the wish of the whole nation, had contributed in a great measure to the development of the spirit of resistance which had shown itself during the last months prior to the death of the Minister of the Interior. The many and heavy defeats and the necessity arising therefrom of mobilising large numbers of the reserve forces caused a state of fermentation among all classes of the Russian people, which was very welcome to the opposition and the revolutionary organisations. Moreover, the dubious behaviour of the Government after the death of the Minister Von Plehve facilitated in a high degree the endeavours to force the people to convince itself that a radical change in the system would be necessary. It was known that all kinds of influences were brought to bear on the Tsar; for on the one side he was urgently encouraged to preserve the reactionary despotism of the last few years, whilst on the other side he was advised to strike out a way of reform and reconciliation in accordance with the wishes of the liberal elements. The persons having the confidence of the Tsar, the Grand Dukes Sergius and Vladimir, together with the Procurator of the Holy Synod, were those who encouraged him to follow the old policy, whilst the Dowager Empress, her younger son, Michael, and probably also his consort, recommended him the latter path. However, even the party of reform did not so much as

ask for a real constitution, only seeking for forbearance as a safeguard for the Tsar and the dynasty, which, in their opinion, would run the greater danger if nothing was done to counteract the revolutionary currents which increased in violence day by day. The Tsar, as usual, was irresolute. The reactionary elements pointed to his father and the fortunate results of a definite policy of repression. Indulgence and forbearance would infallibly encourage the revolutionists and create the greatest horrors, whilst severity, as before, would, without any doubt, make an end to the plots of the opposition parties. Only the most resolute preservation of the power of autocracy would be able to annihilate the revolutionary spirit which had taken firm hold of a part of Russian society, and consequently no weakness and no indulgence must be shown.

For a time it appeared that the Tsar was inclined to follow these counsels, and this would probably have been the case if the unfortunate course of the war had not favoured those who tried to influence him in a liberal and reforming spirit. The mobilisations, which ever called for new classes of older reservists, created an unrest which from time to time, and at short intervals, broke out in open resistance against the authorities; whilst in other parts of the country desertions among the soldiers became more and more general, and in whole districts only a few individuals responded to the call to arms. The appeal for reinforcements became ever more frequent and urgent from Manchuria, the mobilisation of the reservists became more and more difficult, and the active troops at home were badly wanted in order to keep the disaffected people in check. The revolutionary and socialistic organisations agitated more energetically than ever in order to induce the population to resist the mobilisations, and from the liberal camp always more numerous voices were heard which protested against the foreign as well as against the home policy.

Under these circumstances the Dowager Empress and her allies succeeded in determining the Tsar to appoint as Minister of the Interior Prince Sviatopolk Mirski, a man who had proved himself to be an open enemy of Von Plehve, and from whom, therefore, a more conciliatory spirit towards the tendencies of reform was to be expected than from his predecessor. These expectations, moreover, seemed likely to be justified. The new Minister showed himself from the first inclined to lend his ear to advice and to requisitions other than those which up to now had seemed to influence the monarch. His first act as a Minister consisted in such a mitigation of the censorship that for a time it almost appeared as a real and effective liberty of the press. Sviatopolk Mirski wanted to give an opportunity to the public to express its wishes and opinion openly in order that he, aided by the public opinion thus uttered, should be able to plan and carry out a political programme. Nor did the public hesitate to make use of the opportunity offered.

The liberal newspapers, which previously had not dared to express their opinion, now declared frankly that there was no other way out of the predicament in which the empire found itself but the thorough carrying out of reforms, which, however, would not be possible if they were to be entrusted to the bureaucracy, because the latter had at all times opposed them, and now, out of the sheer necessity of self-preservation, would do all in its power to make them as ineffective as possible. The quintessence of all their proposals, that the people must be given a share in the government and in the control of the officials—that is to say, that a representative form of government must be granted—was expressed quite openly by the older, and now free, liberal organs of the press; by some new radical newspapers which had sprung up spontaneously; and lastly, but not least, by the entire "subterranean press." Most remarkable

of all in this respect was perhaps the fact that several of the reactionary organs, above all the *Novoye Vremya*, once famous for its servility, joined in the chorus demanding for reforms, and even laid stress on the participation of the people in the work of reform, which would have to be granted one way or another. Hand in hand with these demands for reforms went utterances which brought such criticism to bear on the new policy of the Government and the way of conducting the war as to have assured for their authors a few months previously a journey to Siberia, if not even to the gallows. As a result of all this there sprang up a remarkable popular agitation, which still continues, and this with an intensity which, though it foretell the worst for the autocratic regime, is the best omen for the movement towards freedom.

This conviction, shared by the parties of revolution and opposition alike, that the decisive moment for the struggle for liberty was drawing near, became clear by the mutual *rapprochement* of these parties and organisations that took place during the summer of 1904. Prior to that date the various organisations of the opposition parties in the Russian Empire had never worked together; on the contrary, they had fought one against the other, or at best had watched each other with great distrust. The common situation made it plain to the most far-sighted leaders of the various parties that the time had come for co-operation, and the difficulty of bringing together the disunited organisations was diminished in a high degree by the fact that the Finnish party took the initiative towards such a coalition as the circumstances called for. The Finnish opposition formed a neutral element, which was looked upon with suspicion by nobody. This party had rendered already to the liberal movement in Russia services which were by no means insignificant in having attracted the sympathies of the really

liberal press of the world by means of its resistance to the despotism of Tsardom. The members of the Finnish opposition, in constituting themselves the neutral centre round which the other more or less progressive elements could range themselves, made it possible to bring liberal and revolutionary, social and anti-social, Russian and Polish, Armenian and Jewish, Georgian and Livonian, Ruthenic and other elements, into one united party in the struggle against Tsardom and its autocratic system.

A preliminary conference between several opposition parties and organisations of different nationalities took place in Paris on the 30th of September and the following days, when an effort was made to come to an understanding to what extent and on what points the programmes and aspirations of the various parties agreed, in order that it might be known how far a common, or rather in a combined, action could proceed. The visible result of these negotiations was the following resolution, signed by all the participants in the conference:—

1. Abolition of autocracy and the withdrawal of all measures directed against the constitutional rights of Finland.

2. Substitution of the autocracy by a democratic system based upon the universal suffrage.

3. Right of autonomy for each nationality and legal protection of the national development against every act of violence on the part of the Russian Government. All parties represented at the conference pledge themselves to bring their influence to bear for the prompt realisation of these points.

From the standpoint of the autocracy this fundamental programme, which asked for a democratic regime and a representation of the people based upon the universal suffrage, must necessarily appear to be completely revolutionary. But further developments very soon showed that

the delegates of the Paris conference had not gone further in their demands than was desirable for the population of the Russian Empire. Before the resolution mentioned was published (it had to be held back for several reasons) it was already manifest to what an extent agitation had increased, and how deeply the public was convinced of the necessity of total change in the system of government.

Sviatopolk Mirski had accorded to the *zemstvo* assemblies of the Empire permission to take part by means of delegates in a general *zemstvo* congress in St. Petersburg in order to discuss important questions with regard to this unique autonomous institution of Russia. At the next moment, however, the official permission was withdrawn. The congress was to be of only a private character. Sviatopolk Mirski neither could nor would altogether withdraw the permission given; and it took place, amid the acclamations of the warmest sympathy from the whole of Russia friendly to reform and liberalism.

The *zemstvo* congress marks a turning point in the historical evolution of Russia. It is true that the *zemstvo* institution has so far been introduced into thirty-four provinces only, that therefore the delegates only represented a part of the immense Russian Empire, and that the non-Russian nationalities were not at all represented by it; but it is equally true that this congress was the first to be composed of the elected representatives of the different classes of society, which through this assembly brought their demands and wishes before the monarch, the autocrat, as well as before the whole people. The demands aimed at all the most thorough-going reforms of the form of government, reforms which could not be carried out except by the introduction of a completely constitutional form of government in place of the autocracy. Everywhere in Russia the courageous and resolute utterances of the

delegates of the *zemstvos* were received with delight. In many quarters even the hope was fostered that now the Tsar would give a favourable ear to the voices in favour of reform among his *entourage*, and that he would fulfil the wishes brought before him. But once more Nicholas II. proved his incapacity to understand the seriousness of the situation; once more did he show that the people of Russia had nothing at all to hope for from him, but would have to take its right by force and by having recourse to a revolution.

For a considerable time after the congress an attitude of expectancy was observed. One class of society after another openly approved the proposal of the delegates of the *zemstvos*, and joined in the demands made by them. The newspapers of the whole of Russia, with the sole exception of the most reactionary section, most energetically backed up the "liberals" who in this period of agitation had assumed the leadership. The provincial assemblies of the *zemstvos*, the meetings of nobles in the various provinces, and above all the universities, students as well as professors, together with the representatives of all the liberal professions —physicians, engineers, artists, authors, etc.—all joined their voices in the same chorus.

But it was all without any direct result. The Tsar, it is true, hesitated, but could not make up his mind to consent to a limitation of his power as autocrat. His reactionary advisers received a more favourable hearing; the Procurator, Pobiedonostseff, represented to him that it was his duty, imposed on him by God, to keep the autocracy intact and unrestricted as he had inherited it from his predecessors; while the cabal of the Grand Dukes, which since the death of M. von Plehve had obtained more and more influence over the Tsar, recommended absolute refusal in face of the demands of the liberals as a duty towards himself, his

family, his dynasty, and towards his people, which, so they said, could never be happy except under the paternal sceptre of an autocrat. But the greatest influence over the unstable sovereign during this period of intrigues and negotiations was exercised by the most despotic and reactionary Grand Duke Sergius, who held an almost absolute sway in Moscow, where he was the Governor-General, and had stirred against himself the most bitter hatred of all elements of society through his ruthless brutality, particularly among the students, against whom he had behaved himself with quite particular savagery. It was by his influence first and foremost that Sviatopolk Mirski was compelled to remain passive in face of the endeavours for reform, and the latter being averse from following a reactionary policy, he saw himself constrained to abandon his post, which now was entrusted to a willing creature of Sergius, the State Secretary Bulyghin.

In the meantime the socialistic and revolutionary associations had by no means remained inactive. In Armenia, Georgia, and especially Poland, the revolutionists had carried on an active propaganda, had organised demonstrations against the Government, had resisted the mobilisation of the reserves, and in general had brought all classes of society into a state of fermentation which became every day more dangerous and could no longer be subdued by the authorities. Even in different parts of Russia proper similar phenomena had made themselves manifest, and among the working population of the towns, as well as in several regions in the country, symptoms were evident which pointed to the fact that the revolutionary propaganda had made progress, and that within a short time violent outbursts of discontent and of the spirit of opposition were to be expected. It was recognised that the situation was perilous, that the tiniest spark could cause the conflagration of the inflammable mass, though in order to meet this danger the

Government knew no better way than opposition to the movement by force of arms.

The threatening storm, however, burst quite unexpectedly in the capital of the Empire. For some little time a man had been active among the workers there whose name is now known all over the world; a priest, modest and inclined to idealism, who held the cause of labour in enthusiastic devotion. Father Gapon had gone through a most remarkable career. At first he was among those who allowed themselves to be deceived by the "friendliness towards the workers" of Von Plehve, and he had worked in conjunction with the police agent Subatoff, already mentioned, to whom Von Plehve had entrusted the "direction of the official agitation" among the workers. Gapon, however, secretly acquired a full insight into the aims and methods of Subatoff and severed his connection with him, after Subatoff's whole agitation had come to nothing and the commission of serious frauds had been brought home to its leader. Thereupon Gapon continued his activity on his own account among the workers, took part in their endeavours of organisation, tried to induce them to reach their aim of improving their position in a peaceful way by forming associations, spent all his time and energy in the work for the mitigation of the misery among the factory hands in St. Petersburg, and, by gradually gaining the reputation of having a great influence over them, became their adviser.

Thus nobody was in a better position than this priest to recognise how dangerous the situation had become when the workers were ready to lend their ear to those who preached to them that only a violent revolution would bring a decisive change for the better; he realised, too, that they were determined to take part in revolutionary outbreaks. He therefore worked out a plan with the object of preventing this once and for all, and of attempting to obtain the

desired reforms in a peaceful way. Like a good many others, Father Gapon believed that the *entourage* and the councillors kept the Tsar in ignorance about the tendencies, the feelings, and the aspirations of the people; that the Tsar, though willing to do anything for his people, was hindered by the bureaucracy; and that he did not know what a strong support his people would and could be to him if he only would separate himself from evil advisers and espouse the popular cause. If the monarch could be convinced of this, then he would certainly carry out the reforms, above all those which were likely to further the welfare of the working classes; and therefore something must be done to show to the Tsar what the people thought in reality. So it came to pass that Father Gapon fixed on the 22nd of January of the present year for the world-renowned demonstration of the workers, in order to prevent the revolution and to bring into immediate touch the Tsar and his people, that the former might be assisted in his task by the latter, and so further the welfare of Russia and of his people. For this reason Gapon made no secret of the intended procession; for this reason he most urgently insisted that his adherents should appear without arms of any kind; for this reason he and his friends would guarantee the safety of the Tsar with their own lives, if he would but allow the people to approach his person and most reverently to present the petition which the workers had organised and on which all their hopes were founded.

Nicholas II., however, had neither the courage nor the heart to be able to appreciate the aims and intentions of the artlessly idealistic priest. Instead of according a gracious welcome to those who approached him in all confidence, he left his palace in haste, almost like a thief in the middle of the night, giving instructions for the reception of the people to others. These latter had made him believe the most

terrible stories, until he sanctioned the shedding of the blood of unarmed men in order to show them how much stronger was the autocracy than they, and how hopeless were all their efforts to limit the will of the autocrat. In what manner the Grand Duke Vladimir, the uncle of the Tsar, gave this proof, is still so fresh in the memory of all that it is unnecessary to enter into details. Nearly three thousand dead and wounded men, women, and children lay scattered in the streets and squares of St. Petersburg; the attempt to hand to the Tsar a peaceful petition had failed once and for all. The Grand Duke had set a gigantic trap from which the unsuspecting crowd could not escape without sacrificing blood and life. The Tsar's kinsman proved that the Tsardom was mightier than the unarmed people, even if it had shown itself weaker against armed foes. But he proved at the same time other things and more, much more, than he had intended: he proved the unavoidable necessity of revolution. Until the 22nd of January, 1905, Nicholas II. could of his own free will have given to his empire a constitution which he might have limited at pleasure and wherein he could have found the best guarantees possible for the safety of his throne and of his dynasty. Now this is no longer possible. Now he must put the decision with regard to the constitution into the hands of the people; he must leave it to the people to decide whether or no he shall continue to reign as a constitutional monarch, and so preserve the throne for himself and his family.

But it is possible that he may not have even so much in his power for long. The sympathetic strikes which broke out everywhere immediately after the 22nd of January, and which still continue, show clearly enough that revolution is making progress, just as the outrage on the Grand Duke Sergius proves that there is no limit to the audacity of the revolutionists in fighting against autocracy. "Vladimir's

Day" in St. Petersburg was the prelude of revolution, the consummation of which a near future will witness. Whether this will take place with or without bloodshed Nicholas II. can still decide, though perhaps the choice may not be open for him much longer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES.—THE CHANCES OF THE AGITATION FOR FREEDOM.

OUTSIDE Russia one continually hears the opinion expressed with regard to the Russian movement towards liberty that an agitation which, when all is said and done, has only so numerically insignificant a part of the forces of the Russian people at its disposal can hardly hope in the near future to gain a victory over the great power which undoubtedly is still wielded by the autocracy. In Russia also the same arguments are by no means unknown in certain circles, especially in bureaucratic society, and even in the upper strata, where people do not possess a very clear understanding of the evolution among the masses of the people, the cultured as well as the uneducated classes. It is certain that, if it were only a question of force meeting force, the autocratic regime could still reckon on a very long existence. But this, luckily, is not the case; other and more powerful forces fight for the movement towards freedom, powers against which autocracy cannot defend itself, forces which without any doubt must one day carry victory with them, even if it will be long in coming. If only as an impetus to these forces, violence is justified, in order to concentrate and to accelerate their effects. The liberal movement will be victorious in any case, whether with or without violence and bloodshed, the alternative choice resting with those who now are at the helm, and their sagacity.

The development of the whole Russian State in more

recent times makes it plain to everyone who regards history as something more than mere facts and dates that the autocracy must, in spite of all, be compelled to retreat little by little. After every period of uncommonly strong expansion the repelled forces of progress have always reasserted themselves, and have advanced by leaps and bounds. Russian society, in spite of all the power and intention of autocracy to suppress progress, has been modernised to a certain extent. Educated people in Russia are no longer in such an insignificant minority as to be a negligible factor. New and modern influences have entered into the social element, and have rendered new methods necessary for its activity. Commerce and industrial interests have compelled the Government to enter upon the economical side of the evolutionary process and to allow modern methods; and this has, of course, brought thousands and thousands to the conviction that Russia can no longer remain an Oriental kingdom, governed by despotic methods, whilst it develops itself materially and in many fields of activity into a modern State. The educated classes, as well as the ever increasing number of workers, were irresistibly brought by the material development into contact with modern ideas and aspirations and thereby to reflection upon the abnormal state of things which prevails in their own country. From that point it was only a short step towards active endeavours to bring about an alteration in this respect, and the more ruthlessly the regime in power for the time being tried to suppress such endeavours, the more surely these became inimical to the Government and revolutionary.

In the circles of the workmen this evolution was a very rapid one, because, when once brought to think, they as a rule became members of the socialist party, the only organisation which promised them a real share in the goods of this life worth striving for. The persecution of socialism

bore in Russia precisely the same fruit as the persecution of idealistic endeavours, at all times and all the world over, has borne in the past. Where those in power betray their fear of new ideas by measures of violence, the protagonists of such ideas cannot but be encouraged in their conviction that they are in the right. But this psychological axiom was recognised by the magnates in Russia no more than had ever been the case in any other part of the world. Consequently the masses, which at first were only interested in socialism, and not really in politics at all, were brought to the conviction that without political reforms they would never obtain an improvement in their economical circumstances. The change was soon complete, and the body of workers was won over for the political movement. The various socialistic organisations now share between themselves the influence over the workers. But as these organisations are not agreed among themselves whether the evolution shall be pushed to open revolution or not, it is no longer of great importance whether social democrats or revolutionary socialists are leading the masses. The main point is that the material and ideal forces which have brought the Russian workers to political consciousness have succeeded in so far that these workers are ready and willing for revolution and to take a part in it as soon as the proper time shall arrive.

The revolutionary movement developed itself more slowly among the educated classes (with the exception of the young students, a great proportion of whom had been for a long time revolutionary), and it cannot yet be considered as carried through completely among them. The liberal circles have not yet quite freed themselves from the idea of the realisation of reforms under the auspices of Tsardom, although a large, and perhaps a greater, part of the liberals now go so far that they ask for a real constitution and are therefore universally

called the "constitutional party." The progressive liberals, who, as far as is known, have constituted themselves as a real political party, have even taken the distinctive name of "League of Liberation," and in their organ, the influential periodical *Osvoboschdenije*, they have even given one to understand that they, too, now consider revolution as the only means of dealing with the situation which has been created by Tsardom through its behaviour towards the people on the 22nd of January. One is, however, hardly justified yet in drawing the conclusion that the party would be ready to help the revolution directly, though encouragement can be given otherwise than by immediate participation in the struggle, and the constitutional party really has greater pecuniary resources at its disposal than any other. Under any circumstances, then, Tsardom can hardly expect any more assistance from this party, which alone forms an indirect help for the revolutionists of no little value.

Still the largely preponderating mass of the population of the Tsar's empire consists of the country people, the really lower class, which for the present is only to a very slight extent revolutionary in politics. It would hardly allow itself to be drawn into the struggle for political and civil rights. The revolutionists, however, possess another means by which the rural population can infallibly be stirred into motion, namely, the agrarian question. Ever since the failure of the emancipation of the peasants in the time of Alexander II. the dissatisfaction concerning the distribution of land which at that time was made has been continuously increasing, and is nowadays unprecedentedly great owing to the monstrous exactions by means of direct and indirect taxation of the peasants. Everywhere in the Empire the peasants are firmly convinced that the soil belongs to them by right, but that it is kept from them by the might of the large landowners who are supported by the Government, by the Tsar

and his family. The Tsar personally owns not less than the fortieth part of all the land of the Empire, and that by no means the least valuable. How much land the other members of his family possess is not known to the author, nor does he know how much is owned by the larger landed proprietors. The peasants, on the contrary, have for the greater part too little land, and part of that which they possess is still encumbered by unpaid redemption debts, while all their landed possessions have to pay the most crushing taxes. That under such circumstances the most bitter dissatisfaction reigns among the population of the country is natural. It is a discontent which only needs provocation from outside to break out in open revolt against all those who are in possession of the land which the peasants consider as their rightful property. The revolutionary socialists, who in many respects see more clearly and farther than the other opposition parties, have long since come to the conclusion that the agrarian question in Russia is not only one of the first importance, but is only to be solved in one way; they have therefore included in their programme the conversion of the land into national property. What measure of success the party has obtained among the peasant population with this plank of its platform can easily be gauged; it is obvious that a movement for such a purpose, when once started in the country, is bound to spread with extraordinary rapidity if the conditions are in other respects favourable. The present moment, indeed, could scarcely be more opportune, since the war and all the direct and indirect charges have caused a feeling among the population of the Empire which is almost tantamount to despair. An agrarian revolution in Russia would most probably be of unparalleled cruelty; and the revolutionists, as well as other parties, tremble before the possibility of such an event. But if autocracy cannot be otherwise overcome, then everything points to the probability of the common

people being also drawn into the movement in order to enforce an ultimate solution.

Among the Russian people proper there are, therefore, the following elements upon which revolution may depend: the workmen of the towns, who in the great majority are ready for the fight at any moment; the left wing of the constitutional party, which encourages the revolutionary movement more or less directly, whilst the rest of the party remains passive; and the population of the country, the peasants, who, so to speak, form a last and terrible reserve.

To these must still be added the foreign nationalities which are subject to the sceptre of the Tsar. The most numerous of these nationalities are those of Ukrania, Ruthenia, and the population of Little Russia, which count over twenty million souls in the Russian Empire. For the greater part these nationalities are still untouched by political and revolutionary tendencies, although many of the past and present men of revolution belong to the tribe of Little Russians. But to make up for this there exists among these races a very strong discontent and bitterness of a nationalistic nature against the dominion of the Tsar on account of the suppression of the Ruthenic language, which is prohibited by the Russian Government in all parts where it was spoken, though it has been impossible to suppress it altogether. A revolution which would offer the Ruthenians an opportunity to develop their nationality would, therefore, be certain of strong sympathies among the intelligent and thinking members of a race which counts some twenty million souls, while the unenlightened section would certainly lend no assistance to Tsardom.

It is different with regard to the Polish nation, the overwhelming majority of which is ready, without any doubt, to take an active part in a revolution against Tsardom, and has already shown so much unrest and eagerness that the

Government of the Tsar not only had to stop the mobilisation of further troops in Poland for the war, but even saw itself compelled to send military reinforcements to various Polish towns. The revolution can, therefore, depend upon the most energetic support in Poland, so that the soldiery of the Government will be, at least, occupied to such an extent in this part of the country that it cannot be used in any other direction.

The same circumstances obtain in Caucasia. The Armenians as well as the Georgians have long since come to the conclusion that the time has come to make an attempt to throw off the yoke of the Russian Tsar. The nationalistic and socialistic revolutionary committees among these races have fostered the spirit of resistance among their tribesmen with such success that the whole of Caucasia is already now in all but open revolt. There also a revolutionary outbreak in Russia would be the signal for a general rising.

Somewhat dissimilar is the situation in Finland, where a considerable section of the opposition is not ready to abandon the path of peaceful resistance, though it still hopes that the day will come on which the Russian Government will see itself compelled to make restitution of rights to the Grand Duchy of Finland. However, there is another party here which works with all its might for action in concert with the Russian revolutionaries in order to contribute its share in the overthrow of Tsardom, and to obtain the possibility for the Finnish people to arrange its internal organisation independently of others, in furtherance of its national development. The universal and bitter discontent with the regime of the Tsar leads one to the supposition that in Finland as well there will take place such strong outbursts in connection with a Russian revolution that the Russian troops in that country will not be available in any other quarter for the defence of Tsardom.

The principal parties and organisations which, in the event of a struggle against the dominion of the Tsar, come into consideration, are for the moment the following:—

The Russian Federation of Emancipation, which insists upon the introduction of a popular government, based upon the universal suffrage. This party has not yet taken a definite position on the revolutionary side, but will probably assist it indirectly.

The Russian Party of the Revolutionary Socialists, which likewise insists upon representation of the people based upon universal suffrage, with the reservation that it should continue to work under such a Government according to its agrarian and socialistic programme. Of all the parties the most conscious of its aims, the most united and most energetic, the revolutionary socialists have by their fighting organisation prepared the revolution in a very considerable degree, and will without any doubt play a prominent part in it—the more so because Father Gapon has now joined it and placed his great influence at the disposal of the workers of his party.

The Socialist Democratic Party, which is to be distinguished from the former, partly because it does not want to have anything to do with such an agrarian programme and partly by its disapproval of terroristic means and methods. The party has, however, declared itself a short time ago ready to help the impending revolution with all the forces and means at its disposal, and to take an active part in it. As a very large number of the industrial workers of Russia follow the watchword of this party, its help is of no little value.

The Jewish "Bund" of Associated Workers, which in its character is likewise socialistic, and, above all, aims at an improvement of the situation and circumstances of the Jewish nationality upon a socialistic foundation. This *bund*, which numbers thirty thousand inscribed members, if not more, can depend on the assistance of almost every Jew in the vast

Russian Empire, and is perfectly clear about this, that only revolution, peaceful or violent, can bring about complete equality of all nationalities and individuals in the empire of the Tsar. It is therefore ready to take part in the revolution.

Socialistic and revolutionary organisations besides these more important ones are also to be found in Lithuania, in White Russia, in Little Russia, and in Courland, all willing and ready to take part in the revolution in proportion to their strength and financial means.

The Armenian and Georgian organisations, "Droschak" and "Sakhartvelo," are both openly revolutionary, the same as the socialistic and nationalistic ones. From what has been said already about their activity, it is sufficiently clear what position they take with regard to the revolution, the outbreak of which they await with impatience, and try to accelerate with all the means in their power.

The same may be said of the Polish socialistic party, which has made propaganda among the people with special energy, and has really organised and led most of the demonstrations, strikes, and conflicts with the authorities; this has very nearly brought Poland into general revolt, and has so arranged that an upheaval of the most serious kind can scarcely be avoided as soon as more violent outbursts of revolution take place in Russia.

A more prudent and more expectant attitude is observed by the Polish National League, which as opposed to the Polish socialistic party, the strongest contingent of which consists of industrial workers counts most of its adherents among the population of the country and the middle classes. Each of these parties has for its principal aim the independence of Poland, but the National League wishes to obtain this purpose gradually, and shows no inclination for a general rising until circumstances are favourable in every respect. The party, which is said to possess considerable

funds, has, therefore, not yet pronounced itself definitely with regard to its participation in a revolution; but, in the face of the general programme and of the aims of the party, it must be taken for granted that when the revolution once becomes general the National League will also join the other revolutionary organisations.

To sum up the position, the constitutional party in Finland will not hear of any resistance other than the passive refusal to submit to unlawful acts, leaving it to the future to show what a revolutionary movement in Russia will be able to obtain, so that it may then act according to circumstances. The party of active resistance, on the contrary, is openly revolutionary, and has declared itself to be willing to work to the best of its ability with the revolution in Russia in order to contribute its part to the fall of Tsardom, and thereby to prepare a secure foundation for the future development of Finland.

To these parties, organisations, and co-operating forces the Tsardom can only oppose its military power, that is force. Any moral assistance of any kind the autocratic system cannot expect from a single class of society in the whole Empire. The question is whether the military power of Nicholas II. is still sufficient to stifle the movement which has brought him into conflict with the greater part of his empire.

Under ordinary circumstances one might perhaps be inclined to answer this question in the affirmative, when one thinks of the numerical strength of the soldiery that has not been despatched to Asia, theoretically perhaps one million soldiers, in practice, however, probably only three quarters of a million. One might well be tempted to doubt the possibility of the revolutionists without weapons, or at best indifferently armed, being in a position to carry through the revolution in face of this military power. But in judging

the situation one must not leave out of the question the present war and its requirements. It is this war that has caused the movement for freedom to develop so mightily, the war that destroys the military reputation of the Tsar's dominion, the war that has brought the Government of Nicholas II. to such a point that it has only left to it the choice between a humiliating peace and the internal revolution brought about by its own fault.

It has already been pointed out that the Government can no longer send regular troops to the theatre of war. It has in the military district of St. Petersburg, including the garrisons in the forts and in Finland, in all two hundred thousand men, chiefly Imperial Guards. Of these troops perhaps a small part could be spared without the personal security of the throne and of the Tsar being imperilled by it, but at best it would be only a small part. Along the western and south-western frontiers, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, there are stationed forty thousand men, that is to say in the parts of the Empire which are at present the most revolutionary. The soldiers, of course, are most urgently wanted in order to prevent a general rising in regions where the vast distances render it necessary to distribute the troops over a great number of localities. The military contingents of Caucasia must likewise remain in the country, lest the whole of that mountainous and inaccessible region should break out into open revolt. Nor would it be any wiser to withdraw the troops from Central Asia, where the news of the huge defeats of the army of the Tsar and of the impending fall of the autocracy has caused such a universally strong ferment that there would certainly be an open revolt if the local military garrisons were reduced in a sensible degree. The same circumstances obtain in a number of the larger towns of the Empire, the garrisons of which cannot be weakened without the unrest prevailing there venting itself in a manner

which would infallibly give the example to a number of other towns. In order to be able to continue the war Nicholas II. is absolutely compelled to take his refuge in new mobilisations of reservists over a widely extended area of the country. But in so doing he without any doubt favours in great measure the revolutionary outbreaks, which has already been sufficiently proved by the last mobilisations, while, if he concludes such a peace as in all appearance he will be compelled to conclude, the defeat and weakness of the Government will become so evident, that it will no longer be possible to suppress the exasperation of the people. It is a vicious circle out of which there is only one exit : the calling of a constitutional assembly to which will be entrusted the decision of the question as to war or peace and of the future form of government for Russia, in other words a revolution without bloodshed.

One is not exactly divulging a dangerous secret in stating at this juncture that the revolutionary parties at the Paris conference were agreed that the movement had to be pushed on exactly in that direction which it has already taken, and towards the first goal which, against all expectations, it has already reached : the creation of such a situation for the Government of the Tsar, that the latter will be compelled either to conclude a humiliating peace, or to serve the purposes of the revolution by driving the people to revolt by further mobilisations. Several circumstances have in this respect favoured the work of the real revolutionists, and have allowed them to obtain quicker and more complete results than one had dared to hope for only a few months ago. These successes have, moreover, imposed upon the revolutionary organisations the duty to work on with more unison and energy than ever, in order to accelerate developments, to enforce the ultimate decision in as short a time as possible, and to put an end to the insupportable misery of the present situation.

One need not be a prophet to be able to predict the course of this development. After the events of the 22nd January, 1905, the revolutionists have, naturally, no course open to them but to incite to revolt, to the greatest extent possible and throughout the Russian Empire, the masses of workers who only wait for an opportunity to revenge themselves for the acts of violence on Vladimir's Day, which were as cowardly as they were inhuman. Whether the bloodshed connected with it will compel Tsardom to yield or no it is impossible to say; but certain it is that, if such should not be the case, an agrarian revolt, the first signs of which are already apparent, will join the mighty movements of workers and strikers, and will probably form the first act of the revolution, as a direct consequence of the bloody prelude in St. Petersburg.

Even now, as has been pointed out before, Nicholas II. can prevent violence and carnage if without delay he leaves the decision with regard to the future in the hands of the people; but he must not hesitate too long about it. Even if in so doing he should succeed in maintaining a monarchical system of government, and as constitutional emperor become Nicholas I., all those who have attentively followed the development of events in Russia can no longer remain in doubt but that as the autocratic Tsar he has been condemned to be Nicholas the Last.

THE END.

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